

The Transnational Trend in Hollywood Popular Cinema's New Transnational Aesthetic

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**A Thesis Presented to
The Department of Literature, Area Studies, and European Languages
-North American Area Studies-
Faculty of Humanities**

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA degree

**UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
Autumn 2009**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
PREFACE	5
CHAPTER 1	6
THE TRANSNATIONAL TREND IN HOLLYWOOD.....	6
1.0 INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 CHAPTER CONTENT	10
1.2 LITERATURE & FILMS	12
CHAPTER 2	15
THE PRINCIPLE CRITERIA OF THE TRANSNATIONAL TREND	15
2.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.....	15
2.1 THE TRANSNATIONAL TREND IN HOLLYWOOD	15
2.2 <i>The Trend's Development Line</i>	17
2.3 THE TREND'S SIX CRITERIA	23
2.3.1 <i>Non-American Places of Action and Characters</i>	23
2.3.2 <i>Transnational Content Reflecting Globalization</i>	24
2.3.3 <i>Accents and Subtitles</i>	25
2.3.4 <i>Third World Cultures – Core/Periphery Drama</i>	28
2.3.5 <i>Transnational Cinema</i>	29
2.3.6 <i>The Formal and Thematic Paradigm of Hollywood</i>	32
CHAPTER 3	39
INFLUENCES FROM MODERN, POSTMODERN AND POST-9/11 CINEMA.....	39
3.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.....	39
3.1 INFLUENCE MODERN AND POSTMODERN CINEMA.....	39
3.2 POST-9/11 CINEMA.....	47
3.3 MULTINATIONAL FILMMAKERS	54
FILM AND IDEOLOGY – GLOBALIZATION AND COSMOPOLITANISM.....	57
4.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.....	57
4.1 “JE SAIS BIEN, MAIS QUAND MEME...”	57
4.2 FILM AND IDEOLOGY	59
4.3 THE PREVAILING IDEOLOGY OF TODAY.....	67
4.4 THE TRANSNATIONAL TREND'S CORPORATE RESPONSE.....	70

4.5 POSITIVE CONSEQUENCE OF GLOBALIZATION?	73
CHAPTER 5	77
CASE STUDIES	77
5.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION.....	77
5.1 BLOOD DIAMOND (ZWICK, 2006)	78
5.1.1 Synopsis	79
5.1.2 Case study.....	81
5.1.3. Additional Comments.....	89
5.2 BABEL (IÑÁRRITU, 2006).....	90
5.2.1 Synopsis	91
5.2.2. Case study.....	93
5.3 SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (BOYLE, 2008).....	96
5.3.1. Synopsis	97
5.3.2. Case Study.....	98
CHAPTER 6	102
A TRANSNATIONAL NARRATIVE	102
6.0 CONCLUSION	102
6.1 FURTHER STUDIES	104
WORKS CITED	106
FILMOGRAPHY	109
APPENDIX I.....	110
FOOTNOTES	112

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everyone that has contributed to this project with support, academic input, and love and care.

I would like to thank my advisor Mark Lucarelli for numerous interesting discussions. Thank you for all corrections and ideas.

Ellen - thank you for being such a great friend, a supportive co-student, and for just being at the right place at the right time.

I would also like to thank Jenny for looking after our children when time was short. I would like to thank my Mother in particular for pushing me to pursue an academic path, and both my parents for challenging and supporting me. My Mother helped me for two whole days in order to complete my thesis and getting the right format, thank you ever so much!

Finally I would like to thank my family, my husband Jan Tore and my children Clara, August and Albert, for being so patient with me over the past two years. I am very grateful for everything you have done to make things easier for me in this process.

PREFACE

I chose the topic for my thesis for several reasons. When deciding what to spend a whole year researching and writing about it was important to me to choose something that 1) I knew something about and had some level of knowledge of outside an academic realm 2) something positive (this was an advice I got from my sister as this thesis would be my main focus for a whole year) 3) something I considered important. From my training and work as an actor I felt that my knowledge of film was at a substantial level. I then searched for something positive to concentrate on stemming from the U.S. and in this case Hollywood. It was when I attended Dr. Michele Aaron's, PHD at University of Birmingham, lecture "Conflict and Death in post-9/11 Film" that I directed my attention towards what she labeled an "un-American Cinema in Hollywood". This is how I found the consistent pattern forming what I now have called the Transnational Trend in Hollywood. In addition to this lecture Henrik Thune's, researcher at NUPI, article in *Dagbladet* (08.10.08) about the West's growing cultural handicap inspired me further. These two influences sent me off on a journey trying to find out first, if there was such a thing as a Transnational trend in Hollywood, second, if it exists where does it stem from, third, what would this trend reflect and fourth, is it a positive consequence of globalization?

I became very infused with the idea that there could be something as a positive consequence of globalization and I was very focused on keeping a positive tone when portraying this trend in Hollywood. However, some of my findings have complicated my quest for a positive reading of my research. I therefore hope that I have managed to give a sober account of what constitutes the trend, where it stems from, what societal aspects it reflects and offer a possible reading of this trend from an optimistic perspective. I hope the trend will continue and that films with alternative points of view will continue to find its natural place in the Hollywood paradigm.

CHAPTER 1

The Transnational Trend In Hollywood

1.0 Introduction

From the post-9/11 period up till today we have seen a number of films with a transnational theme and content emerging from Hollywood's major studios. The growing number of films, containing traces of transnationality and reflecting the ongoing globalization process form strong indications that we are witnessing a new trend within the Hollywood paradigm. While studying these films more closely I discovered that there is a consistent pattern forming a new narrative with a transnational aesthetic. I have chosen to call this consistent pattern the Transnational trend in Hollywood, but this trend has also on numerous occasions been referred to as the globalized genre in Hollywood. However, I have landed on the term trend which I use in the same way that Raymond Borde and Étienne Chaumeton used the term "series" in order to describe the cycle of Film Noir:

"A series can be defined as a group of motion pictures from one country sharing certain traits (style, atmosphere, subject matter...) strongly enough to make them unequivocally and to give them, over time, an unmistakable character...[The films] all reach a peak, that is a moment of purest expression. Afterwards they slowly fade and disappear leaving traces and informal sequels in other genres."¹

Following this description of a series of films the term trend is more fitting than genre as the term avoids many of the complications attached to the genre theory. For practical reasons I have chosen to use the term trend rather than series. The trend could arguably constitute its own genre, however, the trend is contradictive to many traits of genre theory and therefore I have chosen to label it a trend. As this thesis has a limited scope I have had to choose to focus on what constitutes this trend and its influences. It was thus beyond the scope of this thesis for a genre discussion, but this is not to say that I am ruling the option out.

I have chosen to use the term transnational as this term is more fitting for the themes of this trend than globalized. By transnational I refer to Ulrich Beck's explanation of the term:

“...The local ties cancel the equation of spatial and social distance implicit in the national picture of society, so that “transnational lifeworlds” come into being. These transnational phenomena should not be thought of as being the same as “inter-state” phenomena”. Transnational coexistence means social proximity in spite of geographical distance – or, social distance in spite of geographical proximity.”²

Further Beck explains that transnational also means transcultural, this implies that variants of glocal cultures, i.e. a blend of local and global, will “become capable of being experienced and recognized within the nexus of world society”.³ This explanation is more fitting with how the films in this trend are dealing with topics stemming from globalization than the term globalized would. There are many emotions and issues attached to the term globalization, both negative and positive. The term globalized does embrace the interconnectedness of the world society, but it is also more colored by neoliberal capitalism, which is its driving force, and the associations that come with that perception. In order to avoid these (negative) associations I have chosen to use the more neutral term transnational. The trend is neither protesting against or purely celebrating globalization, therefore it is more accurate to name the trend after what area of the globalization process it is exploring, namely the transnational spaces emerging as a consequence of globalization, particularly those emerging in the drama occurring when core and periphery cultures meet.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. One is to map out what constitutes the Transnational trend, which I have done by looking at its influences, both cinematically and ideologically and in an economic perspective. Secondly, I explore the possibility of this trend being a positive consequence of globalization. I do this by presenting some theories of how elements within globalization are cosmopolitan and exemplify how this is made evident in the films throughout the thesis and in particular through my case studies. I had hoped to leave more space for this part of

the thesis, but I have presented what I regarded the most valuable information on the topic within the space and time available.

The trend started in the immediate post-9/11 period with a number of war films taking place in non-American countries, but it was with the film *Hotel Rwanda* (George, 2004) that the trend reached its purest form in including non-American protagonists. After a period of war films exploring the American morale and America's role in a transnational environment in the immediate post-9/11 period, Hollywood started issuing a number of films with non-American protagonists and dealt with issues of Third world cultures, from a non-American point of view from 2004 and onwards. The latest films in the trend also deal with transnational issues of trade and economy more so than American military involvement-related films of the early stage of the trend. The latest films in the trend, such as *The International* (Tykwer, 2009), have gone back to having more Western protagonist, but all the same have an inclusion of Third world issues and transnational themes focusing on how all countries are responsible for the consequences of globalization. All the films focus on the challenges of how International Organizations (IOs) can deal with the rapid changes related to the globalization process that affects us all. The films are Hollywood productions, or appropriated by Hollywood, and thus in keeping with the formal paradigm of Hollywood, this is the most central point that makes these films different from films within Transnational cinema.

A transnational aesthetic is symptomatic for Hollywood at the moment and there is a non-unilateral trend going on.⁴ This is evident in many of the new films that emerged in the post-9/11 period and is still going on today. With its non-American protagonists the Transnational trend in Hollywood indicates by these alternative points of view that a new cultural elite will emerge. This elite consists of people who have had to view the world from two different angles, from the Western (centre) point of view, and the periphery culture (non-Western countries). This may indicate that the cultural centre of the world is about to adjust, and that the West is losing grounds as the defined centre. This manifests itself particularly in literature, through the popularity authors like Haruki Murakami, Khaled Hosseini, Ziad Smith, and Orhan Pamuk have enjoyed the past few years. These authors have in common that they all live in the drama occurring between the old world's centre and the periphery culture. Political analysts such as Fareed Zakaria and Amartya Sen (from India), Kishore

Mahumbani (Singapore) or Ahmed Rashid (Pakistan) are all part of a new generation of influential global analytics, with a broad international appeal, that aid the shift of cultural positions. In film the influences of multinational filmmakers, such as Iñárritu who directed *Babel* (Iñárritu, 2006), are contributing to the shift in point of view. Thus the “White Man’s Privilege” is fading out, the white man’s point of view is loosing its hegemony. However, Hollywood has picked up on the West’s developing cultural handicap and has adopted both influences from Third cinema and stories from the interstices of globalization, which constitutes the Transnational Trend. This trend can be read as a positive consequence of globalization that aids Westerner’s perception of periphery cultures and global challenges that comes with the globalization process. Cinema is an effective informational tool, if these films do not serve as a vehicle for the middlebrow’s perception of periphery cultures and social issues, then at least the trend serves as a vehicle for the middlebrow’s perception of world cinema. This perception prepares the audience for an increased openness towards that which is not Hollywood. Cosmopolitanism is a keyword in this development, which the Transnational trend contributes to support.

There is a shift in the cultural scene towards a more transnational focus. The number of authors originating from both core and periphery cultures supports this point, so does the films that emerged from Hollywood post-9/11 and continue to do so. This is why I have chosen to examine how this transnational aesthetic in Hollywood manifests itself, and also to investigate where this non-unilateral trend in film stems from. What influences are contributing to rocking the boat of the “White Man’s Privilege”, or is the boat rocking at all? This shift, occurring in the cultural centre, might be read as one of the more positive effects of globalization. Many claim that globalization is the equivalent to Americanization, I, on the other hand, suggests that this trend might be read as an attack on Americanization and even American exceptionalism in the sense that it has moved beyond this concept of nationality in tandem with the general weakening of nation states that we are currently experiencing. According to Andrew Higson “...a stable notion of the national cannot fully or even adequately account for the fundamental role played by globalization in much if not most contemporary film production and reception.”⁵ In other words, globalization is not a one-way street where influences are linear. Films, both Hollywood films and by alternative filmmakers, as Higson suggests, have fully

imbricated the national with the transformative and destabilizing dynamics of modernity and transcultural contact.⁶ However, the trend is also a response to Transnational Corporate power that needs to communicate with a larger multinational market. The trend is thus a response to expanding market, which results in films that crosses borders and communicates broadly both culturally and audibly. The trend has lost some of its impetus in the present financial climate; this explains the fading of the trend. However, I believe that films with a transnational nature from Hollywood will continue, but the films with non-Western protagonists and taking place in non-Western places will wane as they are considered riskier projects financially.⁷

1.1 Chapter Content

In chapter 2 I lay out the basic platform for this trend, which is its transnationality and appropriation of Transnational cinema, non-American place of action and eventually non-American protagonists, and the usage of various accents of English and non-English languages. There are six different criteria forming the framework for the trend, I go into these six points in detail. In the sixth criterion I explain how these films are in keeping with the formal and thematic paradigm of Hollywood, which is the crucial criterion for separating this trend from Transnational cinema.

Clinton's approach of Nation Building in the 1990s, and Bush's War on Terrorism has contributed to physical American presence in non-western parts of the world. Hollows and Jancovich stress that it is essential to acknowledge the different ways in which popular culture has been articulated within different historical moments.⁸ The historical changes we are witnessing today, of shifting power structures and the globalization process' rapid changes and challenges to the world society, is most definitely articulated in the Transnational. In chapter 3 I further explain what cinematic traditions and influences the Transnational trend draws on and stems from. The chapter is divided two parts. The first part explains the modern and postmodern cinema's influence and traditions, and highlights the differences between them. Postmodern cinema has obvious similarities to the new Transnational trend, but several events of shifts in the world's power structure, including the events of 9/11, have created a shift in contemporary filmmaking which is evident in this trend. In the second part of this chapter I explain how the events of 9/11 made an impact resulting in these changes.

It is vital to explain the Transnational trend in Hollywood in terms of political economy. New markets are emerging as a consequence of globalization and it is important for Hollywood as an industry to also communicate with these markets. The giant media conglomerates control the transnational flow of images and symbols, and market forces control them. Chapter 4 is divided into three parts. The first explains how films, particularly those from Hollywood, serve as projector of predominant ideologies through its formal and thematic paradigm. In this part I refer to several strands within Film theory, such as Screen Theory and Mass Culture critics. Next I go into some details explaining what constitutes the dominant ideology of today. In this section I refer to Ulrich Beck's theories of globalization. Further I show how Hollywood, as an industry, is a transnational corporation (TNC) operating in the global market and producing films to meet the markets needs and demands, and thus the Transnational trend is nothing more than an economic outreach towards new markets.

Finally in this chapter I show that the side effect of this economic agenda is a projection of increased transnational awareness and cosmopolitanism. I thus conclude that despite the trend being an economically driven trend it is nonetheless a positive consequence of globalization.

Chapter 5 is a case study of three of the films from the Transnational trend in Hollywood. These case studies are presented in order to exemplify how the criteria and topics I have explained throughout the thesis manifest themselves. The three films I have chosen as case studies are those I believe to be the purest films within the trend. The films are *Blood Diamond* (Zwick, 2006), *Babel* (Iñárritu, 2006), and *Slumdog Millionaire* (Boyle, 2008/09).

Chapter 6 of this thesis is a short summary and contains concluding remarks of my findings. Finally I offer some suggestions for further studies based on research questions that came to me during my research, but unfortunately beyond the scope this thesis.

Star's social engagement is a factor that is important in regards to the Transnational trend and I have written a chapter on this topic. However, this is a chapter that I had to cut from this thesis. The chapter is about Hollywood star's influence on audiences and on agenda setting in Hollywood productions through their social activism. I felt that this topic was important in order to explain actor's growing

power in Hollywood and how they actively use their status as celebrities to humanitarian work, but I rewrote the chapter to a more compromised section of the influences of multinational filmmakers.

1.2 Literature & Films

As mentioned in my preface it was Dr. Michele Aaron's lecture and Henrik Thune's article in *Dagbladet* that got me started on this project. I have been in contact with Aaron via email, and Aaron kindly approved my referencing to her lecture in this thesis. Generally in my search for literature I ran into quite a lot of difficulties as this trend is not documented earlier. I had to start by defining what the trend consisted of and search for literature on the different topics. Defining what the Hollywood paradigm was and how the Transnational trend communicated with these conventions was the area that was the most accessible. I used many sources to find what constitutes these conventions, but landed on Robert Ray's brilliant book on *Hollywood's Certain Tendency*. Further I had to look at theories within World cinema, Third cinema, and Transnational cinema. Through the works of Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden on Transnational Cinema, Hamid Naficy's on Accented cinema, and Ella Shoat and Robert Stam on Unthinking Eurocentrism I found much of the Transnational trend identifiers of non-Hollywood filmmaking conventions.

Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard's book on Postmodern cinema proved very useful in order to highlight the similarities and differences between both modern and postmodern Hollywood filmmaking and the Transnational trend. Robert Ray's work was also helpful in this aspect. Cynthia Weber's book "Imagining America at War" was extremely valuable in order to look at how the events of 9/11 influenced post-9/11 filmmaking and reflecting American values and perceptions in this era. I searched through a number of books and essays on the topic, but found that Weber's work was that which directly touched the very nerve of the Transnational trend and what I wanted to focus on. Joseph Natoli's *This is a Picture and Not the World, Movies and the Post-9/11 America* and Jonathan Rosenbaum's book *Movie wars: how Hollywood and the media conspire to limit what films we can see* were useful references throughout the thesis in order to highlight this particular period. Guy Westwell's *War Cinema: Hollywood on the front line* was also helpful in understanding the new moral within films emerging in the post-9/11 period. David

Desser's essay on "Global Noir" in Grant's *Film Genre Reader III* was helpful in order to find support for my the idea of such a thing as a Transnational trend really existing, as many of his theories on the genre Global Noir are fitting with mine. The difference between our theories is that I have chosen to call the consistent pattern I found in these films a trend rather than a genre. Grant's collection of essays proved useful when searching for what category to place the Transnational trend in. It was also somehow confusing as many of the essays were conflicting both with each other's theories of what constitutes a genre, but also conflicting with the pattern I had found in the Transnational trend. In Janet Staiger's essay on genre hybridization, however, I found indications that the term genre could be appropriate as Staiger claims that no Hollywood genre has ever been pure. Despite her claim I concluded that it would be on the safer side to apply the term trend as it consists of many different genres and because I believe it to be a little too early to brand it a genre at this point. However, as I mentioned earlier this discussion is beyond the scope of this essay, but would be an interesting topic for further research. For the time being I have rested on the term trend and explained it by referring to Raymond Borde and Étienne Chaumeton's definition of a series of films in their essay "Towards a Definition of Film Noir" which I found in Silver and Ursini *Film Noir Reader*.

Jane Hollows and Mark Jancovich's collection of articles on film theory was helpful in order to make an outline of how different theorists within film theory have mapped out how film can serves as a projector of ideology and audience reception. I have also referred to Adorno and Horkheimer's work on Mass culture critique.

David Held and Anthony McGrew's collection of articles on globalization in *The Global Transformations Reader, An introduction to the Globalization Debate*, and Ulrich Beck's *What is Globalization?* have both been extremely useful in order to navigate in the realm of the countless Globalization theories. These works have aided me in explaining how the Transnational trend is both reflecting the ongoing globalization and projecting its ideological messages. Several articles in Held and McGrew's book were useful in order to explain Hollywood's economic incentive for producing films as those in the Transnational trend. Tomlinson, Smith and Norris' articles on globalization and cosmopolitanism were helpful in order to exemplify how the Transnational trend can be seen as a positive consequence of globalization.

Box Office Mojo and Wikipedia's web pages on films have been very useful in finding box office figures and other production details. The International Performing Arts database (IPA) and J-Store have provided me with many useful articles and reviews.

The films I have chosen to write about are films that I found the most useful in order to explain the Transnational trend. I refer to several films throughout the thesis and culminate it with a thorough case study of *Blood Diamond*, *Babel*, and *Slumdog Millionaire*. In appendix I there is a full overview of the films belonging to the Transnational trend and there is also a full overview of all films mentioned in this thesis in the filmography.

I was inspired to use case studies to exemplify the traits of the Transnational trend from Barry K. Grant's book on film genres; *From Iconography to Ideology*. I felt that this approach is more useful than an analysis of the films as my purpose is to show how these films fit into those criteria I have laid out for the trend rather than analyzing them from a globalized or transnational point of view. Of course these elements come in to these case studies, as these are vital elements in the trend. However, I have chosen not to go into greater detail in usages of references, symbols and representations of various themes and topics in these films in order to stay within the limited space allowed for the format of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

The Principle Criteria of the Transnational Trend

2.0 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter I will first explain in general what the Transnational trend consists of. There are six criteria forming this trend. In order to put these elements in to a more concrete setting I provide an overview of the trend's development line. In this part I use examples from the films to explain the trend's content and form. In Appendix I there is a complete overview of all the films belonging to the Transnational trend.

The second part is a more detailed explanation of the six criteria. Here I go through the background and influences forming these criteria in order to clarify the trend's identifiers. The most substantial section of this part is on the topic of how the Transnational trend is in keeping with thematic and formal paradigm of Hollywood. This is a very crucial point as this is what distinguishes the trend from Transnational Cinema, which attempts to serve as an alternative to Hollywood productions.

2.1 The Transnational Trend in Hollywood

The trend consists of some defining elements. All of these elements will be dealt with in greater detail, but first I will explain what they consist of on a very general note.

First, common for all the films within this trend is that the place of action is non-American and many have non-American protagonists. In a sense these films can be said to be a series of non-American films in Hollywood, however their transnational content constantly roots them in a Western and global awareness. American characters are also present in all of these films. In *Babel* American characters are even the protagonists in one of the four plots of the film. But the plot features these Americans in a periphery culture and explores the complications of such a meeting on many levels that still keep the films within the Transnational trend.

Second, the films are all transnational in content. This is shown in various ways, developing from merely treating the subject of interconnectivity of International Organizations (IOs), such as the UN and NATO, and the U.S., to portraying the

complex transnational consequences of the ongoing globalization process. It also shows the interconnectivity of people on a more personal level as consequence of globalization. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden explain the transnational as “...the global forces that link people or institutions across nations.”⁹ They further argue that one of the keys to transnationalism is the “recognition of the decline of national sovereignty as a regulatory force in global existence.”¹⁰ All the films in the Transnational trend are exploring these issues and the part that we as individuals play in it as well as the official institutions and the media. The films are all mirroring the ongoing globalization process and dealing with issues that are of concern within this process both politically and ideologically. They are dealing with changes in how individuals can operate and influence its surroundings within trade, tourism, transnational security threats, the dominant ideology of neoliberal capitalism, politics, etc. The Transnational trend operates in the interstices between the local and the global, and it explores the implications of the elements forming the glocal¹¹. The characters within the trend are often defined by a powering dynamics of mobility in a globalized world.

Third, the films have different accents of English, and in the later stage of the trend’s development line non-English languages are used extensively. Traditionally foreign accented English has been connected to stereotypes such as the Mexican bandit, the Russian communist or mob, Eastern European gangsters, Asian martial arts combatants, or other brands resulting from their accent. In the Transnational trend the accents of English are not mainly used to identify a character’s position in some classification, but as an authentic portrayal of the character’s origin. The different accents and languages are also used as a tool to emphasize the transnationality and interconnectivity of the world and themes these films are dealing with. Some of the films are entirely in non-English languages and thus subtitled. The tradition of subtitling has been very weak in Hollywood previously. There has been an accepted truism that American audiences are allergic to subtitles, and Hollywood, as well as independent films, has almost entirely cast off the idea of using them. The Transnational trend shows that this is now a contested truism, a topic I will return to later.

Fourth, all these films include Third world countries and cultures and deal with the drama occurring when core and periphery cultures¹² meet in one way or the other.

This inclusion also contributes to the trend's transnationality as the connection to Third world countries often are connected to transnational corporations (TNCs), which form transnational social spaces through their operations. Within these transnational spaces there are hybridization processes of cultures, which often tend to lean more towards a Western interpretation of the original culture, which is also the case within the Transnational trend. In other words, the trend forms a sort of third culture – a appropriation of Third world cultures in the meeting with western cultures and in particular Hollywood's formal and thematic paradigms.

Fifth, the trend has appropriated elements from Transnational cinema that contain elements from Third Cinema, Accented and Displaced cinema. I will explain these terms later, however, the elements consist of historical consciousness, political engagement, critical awareness, and genre hybridization. In addition the trend has picked up on accented cinema's usage of language and accents of English that are not neutral and value-free. From displaced cinema the theme of loss and displacement, which are reflections of transnationality, have been appropriated.

Sixth, all the films within this trend are in keeping with the formal paradigm of Hollywood. In other words, these films are Hollywood in their DNA no matter how global or glocal they are in content. The films are placed within easily recognized genres as Action, Drama, Thriller, etc., it thus hybridizes genre. Narratives from the Hollywood paradigm are deployed, despite the point of view being non-American. It is important to point out that though there are many similarities between the above mentioned elements of World cinema, there are perhaps even more differences between them. I have chosen to focus on the similarities in order to highlight what forms the Transnational trend, as it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to include both. I will there fore make a brief account of the formal and thematic paradigm of Hollywood, but I will show how these films have in addition to this paradigm adopted elements from Transnational cinema making the films less valid as representatives of a national cinema.

2.2 The Trend's Development Line

The films in this trend started to emerge in the post- 9/11 era, and in its early stage it consisted of mainly war films with American male protagonists engaged in some war effort in a non-American country. These films are stories from previous American wars such as the first Gulf War in the early 1990s and the humanitarian

operations with American involvement, such as in Somalia in the mid 1990s and the Balkans in the late 1990s. The narratives of these films are personal stories dealing with the loss of certainty surrounding the subject of morale in the choice and actions imposed on the protagonist in the action of war. The places of action in the films of the early stage of this trend are in non-American countries and reflect American military presence and involvement around the world. They reflect both the American society portrayed in the soldiers and the place where they are stationed. Second, these films present the interrelation between American and International Organizations (IOs), and the interconnectivity of security policy as result of the increased transnational activity and threats. These films have aided the emergence of non-Western protagonists that emerged later in the development line of the trend. By making a Western audience aware and attentive to conflicts and cultures in, for Westerners, a lesser known part of the world, but at the same time very presenting stories that affect their own lives and cultures these films communicate with a broad audience worldwide. Films occurring in the middle stage of the trend, such as *The Valley of Eliah* (Haggis, 2007), *Lions for Lambs* (Redford, 2007), *Rendition* (Hood, 2007), *Syriana* (Gaghan, 2005) made the route easier for the films with non-Western protagonists as a portrayal of these foreign countries and cultures made the viewers more accustomed to and receptive to films with an alternative view point.

When I say that the trend reached its purest form in 2004 with the film *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) it is because this is the first film in this trend that was brave enough to use a non-American protagonist to tell the story of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. As pointed out by Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, the increasingly interconnected world where hybridizing tendencies have become dominant, Transnational cinema factors Europe and U.S. into the problematics of “world cinema”.¹³ It seems their point has been picked up on by Hollywood filmmakers, it is made evident both in the Asian influence in many Hollywood blockbusters, but perhaps most particularly in the films in the ongoing Transnational trend in Hollywood. The lead characters in *Hotel Rwanda* are played by American and British actors based in Hollywood, the crew is a mix of several nationalities, it is produced and directed by the Irish director Terry George, and the distribution was done by Lions Gate Entertainment and United Artists. *Hotel Rwanda* is a film, which is based on a true story, and an account of an historical event, this is important as the trend all the way have their basis in true

stories and events. The immediate post-9/11 films had their basis in actual events, but *Hotel Rwanda* was the first film to portray true events from a non-American point of view. The trend continued in this mode, however this film is the only one that is an account of actual events. The American and international presence in the film is portrayed through characters that are humanitarian workers or UN soldiers. This was the first film to start off a row of films that in addition to raising questions of military involvement through IOs such as the UN and NATO had a humanitarian focus. The film was not about the U.S. at war with some nation as part of a transnational military operation, but rather whether or not a local crisis such as the genocide taking place in Rwanda in 1994 is a global crisis or not, it raised the question of a global responsibility in such matters.

Blood Diamond (2006) was the next big Hollywood production also set in Africa, this film differs from *Hotel Rwanda* in that it is pure fiction based on an ongoing conflict, whereas *Hotel Rwanda* was a film based on a true story and an account of an historical event. The newer films in the trend are more concerned with the globalization process in a corporate sense of the term than the earlier films within the trend, which were centered around American military involvement on a global level. *Blood Diamond* gives a portrayal of Africa as both African in Africa¹⁴ and Africa as a global player in the capitalist system of globalization.

Babel (2006) is a very good example of this trend as it actually takes place in four different countries, and shows how three different conflicts are bound together in a globalized world. There is an American family in this film, but they are put out of place of their safe core culture-existence and placed in unfamiliar situations where their way of communicating falls short.

Slumdog Millionaire (2008) has taken the trend even a step further by being so brave as to risk being without stars and taking place in India without much presence of other nationalities. However, the world and the currents of globalizations are very much present in the film. The film bears elements constantly reminding us that India is an up and coming superpower, part of what is referred to as BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China). We literally see how India has risen from slums to high rise new buildings in this film, we hear constant communication with the outside world and how Indian people are working their way into the Western world by acquiring knowledge about its culture. Tourists are ripped off as a consequence for not

understanding the Indian culture and thus fall victim of their own ignorance. There is a clear presence of money in the film, and it is juxtaposed with love; those who hold high positions of the building of India are “the bad guys” and those not concerned with money, fame and success are “the good guys”. This film is the next stage in the trend’s development line, however, I am afraid that it may be the final and ending stage of the trend due to the financial climate of the world today which also affects the film industry. Issuing films taking place in the periphery culture with no stars to fill the roles of the protagonists may prove to be far too risky economically speaking and thus in danger of being a non-repetitive project that the studios were willing to bet money on.

The International (2009), which again is of a more international character with mainly Western protagonists, could be argued to be Hollywood’s continuation of the trend, however, safely told from a Western point of view, which makes it more marketable for a broader audience. *The International* nonetheless contributes to make Hollywood transnational by allowing for accents of English to be part of any character without it being used as a reference to an identity based on origin. Interestingly enough, the villain in this film is Scandinavian, which is very rare in film history, and at home with his Danish family we hear him speak Danish, and subtitles are used. This marks a shift in the traditional portrayal of film villains as Latin, Russian, or Asian, even German (from WWII films), this can also be said to be reflecting the economic power centers of the global economy. This film is in keeping within the Transnational trend with its transnational theme of international banking systems creating local conflicts, in typical periphery cultures, in order to make them economical dependent through debts to their banking systems. The quagmires of globalization and the system of neoliberal capitalism are highlighted in this film, as well as the (non-) effectiveness of international organizations and international law.

The focus on transnational conflicts, themes, transnational corporations, mass tourism, social struggles etc lays the foundation for this Transnational trend in Hollywood. It allows for non-American voices and non-Western cultures to be represented in Hollywood productions, and marketed towards a mass audience worldwide. Film has always been reflecting currents within society, and according to some functioned as an instrument of ideology. The Transnational trend in Hollywood is clearly an ideological consequence of globalization. This trend reflects a dominant

ideology visible through the process of globalization, which is the ideology of neoliberalism according to Ulrich Beck.¹⁵ According to David Held the globalization process lies in regional-global networks and their self-definition through the mass media's image-flows at a cultural level.¹⁶ As the films in the Transnational trend are using elements of this globalization process, by dealing with the interconnectedness of the world, and particularly focusing on the interstices of the core and periphery cultures, they have an important role to play in creating what constitutes this flow of images and self-definition. Film functions as an instrument and support of ideology and the film industry is very much dependent on the global market, and thus needs to reflect this market in its products. Adjusting to a new world order of multipolarity, making Brazil, India, Russia and China more active and important both economically and on a military level, it could be argued that this has made an impact resulting in a more transnational flow in content and images in Hollywood. Incorporating Indian culture as part of an American film industry seems only natural as a result of, and in accordance, with India's growing influence in the global marketplace. China's growing status and part taking in the world economy, particularly now with a solid grip around USA's outstanding debts, allows for a prediction of a more visible China in coming Hollywood productions. The film, *Battle of Red Cliff* (Woo, 2008), with an all-Chinese cast, directed by Hollywood director John Woo, and distributed by Summit Entertainment, may show the beginning of this inclusion. It also supports the argument of a significant shift in the cultural center of the world.

Though the trend may be read as a positive consequence of globalization by projecting image flows from periphery to core, showing that globalization does not necessarily equal Americanization or has to be a one way street, it does critique elements of the globalization process and its implications. Exploring the quagmires of the system it brings with it the postmodern discourse of not believing in systems and a general mistrust to politics both national and international. The focus of the role of first, IOs and documentation of atrocities through the media (these themes are present in both *Hotel Rwanda* and *Blood Diamond*) and second, the origin of products and through which processes they are made before they reach the consumer are topics that are raised in typical for the Transnational trend. The theme of trade and the origin of goods are particularly relevant in the film *Blood Diamond*. In the global free market products such as diamonds are produced through inhumane methods and regimes, and

these facts hardly ever reach or concern the consumer in the Western world. It is film such as *Blood Diamond* that can contribute to increase our awareness of an industry that exploits people in an already desperate situation, and can make consumers aware that they can contribute to secure safe trading of the products they choose to buy. Local conflicts are no longer local as they affect us all due to the interconnectedness of the world, Hollywood functions as a support and instrument of the ideology of globalization with its exceptional skills of communication with a mass audience worldwide. However, though the films within the trend often provide critical comments on currents within globalization it never actually critiques the very system of globalization. It provides us with potential solutions to these global challenges, suggesting that that the framework of our society, local or global, is not in need of substitution or major change.

In true Hollywood style, keeping with its paradigm, these films suggest hope and give reasons for having trust in solutions generated by the political system that creates the problems that the films critique. Some of the films also plant distrust of IOs and their effectiveness. In other words these films never actually or fully critique the capitalist system that is the basis in the globalization process. They never fully critique the very system that the film industry is depending on, of course they do not, this system is their “raison d’être”. It is also arguably not a positive consequence of globalization that Hollywood takes advantage of its cultural hegemony and appropriates and hybridizes Third world cultures and film traditions when it could easily have more willingly distributed the films produced within Transnational cinema. Despite these clear limitations there has nonetheless been a shift in Hollywood’s presentation of the world. This shift is one that is, as pointed out by Michele Aaron, from complacency to culpability manifesting it self in an extended sense of a shared responsibility to everything glocal.¹⁷ The transnational trend, gives non-Western cultures and people fairer representation. Perhaps it has formed the periphery culture into something ‘glocal’, but it has contributed to make the world just that little bit more cosmopolitan. I will come back to this topic in chapter 3 where I further discuss the ideological reflection of globalization this trend forms. However, after this short introduction of the trend and some of its influences, I will exemplify and explain further what this transnational genre consists of through a presentation of three films from the later stage of the trend development line in the next chapter.

See Figure 1.1 in the Appendix I for a overview of films within the Transnational trend in Hollywood.

2.3 The Trend's Six Criteria

2.3.1 Non-American Places of Action and Characters

The non-American places of action in the Transnational trend can be read as a displacement of the U.S., or the American position in the world structure. It can be read as an indication of a need for reinvention and reevaluation of what constitutes the U.S. and an American identity abroad. The engagement with deterritorialization, which the films of the Transnational trend have, is exactly what makes them Transnational. The stories thus become both personal stories of individuals and of social and public stories of the challenges global issues are posing.

The stylistic usage of landscapes in these films has been adopted from Diasporic filmmaking tradition. Diasporic filmmakers tend to portray an idealized homeland, it often refers to a state as it is or a homeland yet to come. In *Black Hawk Down* (Scott, 2001) the beautiful beaches of Somalia are constantly referred to as a place one almost would want to spend some time in, stressing the almost. This idealization of landscapes and nature is particularly evident in *Blood Diamond* where we are presented with a beautiful Sierra Leone corrupted by civil war enabled by global trade. In this film we are presented with both an idealized homeland in terms of the potential that lies in Sierra Leone, and an idealized “homeland” of the U.S. and the international society represented by journalist Maddy Bowen who enables justice to triumph.

Most of these films have characters that are American, but in the latter part of this trend they are not main characters. These American characters are often seeking change, or for an answer to existential questions or justifications for their actions on behalf of the U.S. (war films). According to Hamid Naficy Exilic filmmakers want to define things in their lives both in relationship to their homeland and in strictly political terms.¹⁸ In the same sense American characters in the Transnational trend have the same function. By being out of their own country they become displaced, if not exiled then temporarily and willingly displaced, and in this position they represent their homeland, and people, which is often the case with Exilic filmmaking. The

American characters are trying to consent with the relations to the hosting country they are in and these relations are constantly tested against the relations to the homeland, which is the U.S. The non-American characters are the checking point against which American values and perceptions are tested.

The fact that the protagonists of these films, more so in the later stage of the trend, are non-American also symbolizes a shift in the position of the American. In other words, by using non-American protagonists these films communicate that Americans are not always playing first violin in the global village. In order to be able to contribute to the global symphony the U.S. needs to learn how to read the notes. The American characters in these films more often than not seek to understand how to operate in and with the country of their placement.

There are some films in the Transnational trend that do not fulfill this criterion. The first films in the trend did not have non-American protagonists, the war films exploring an American identity in transnational spaces were told from an American point of view. However, these films were in keeping with the element of taking place in a non-American place. It was not until 2004, with *Hotel Rwanda*, that we began to see stories told from a non-American point of view. *Babel*, which is placed in the purer part of the trend, also has American main characters, but the

As with any style or trend this trend also have deviations from the norm, some meet all criteria and other only some. This is part of the development line in the trend and does therefore not weaken my theory of such a trend existing in Hollywood. The bottom line here is that the non-American placing of action and the non-American characters have introduced new points of view both visually and thematically.

2.3.2 Transnational Content Reflecting Globalization

According to Joseph Natoli, the glue connecting the Bush administration and the movies was an unchecked globalized capitalism. He further says that “Popular film needs to plug into that connect not because it wants to critique it but because it has potency. It has power over us.”¹⁹ In addition to its transnationality, which is a natural phenomenon occurring in the globalization process, the films in the Transnational trend refer to issues such as increased corporate power as consequence of globalization. This increased corporate control, which also is transnational, contributes to depoliticize the world, according to both Ulrich Beck and Carl Boggs.

“...Corporations acting within the framework of world society have gained additional scope of action and power beyond the political system.”²⁰ This becomes evident in particularly *Blood Diamond*, where the political actions taken to secure legal diamond trade, seem to have little or no effect. Both this example and the issues of transnational terrorist threats (*Babel*), and the involvement in local humanitarian crises (*Hotel Rwanda*) supports Boggs argument that: “The disintegration of politics in the modern world (and not just in the United States) ultimately reflects the profound failure of major ideologies to continue to furnish visions and guideposts for the future – indeed to offer the kind of political language required to confront new situations, conditions, and challenges.”²¹

The topic of globalization will be discussed in further detail in chapter 3 when I return to the topic of globalization as the predominant ideology of today and how the Transnational trend are projecting ideological messages support it.

2.3.3 Accents and Subtitles

Traditionally Americans have received foreign speaking films with subtitles rather poorly. The audience, on a general note, experience subtitles as disturbing and annoying and thus avoids seeing films that needs subtitling. According to Jonathan Rosenbaum most movies are targeted at a fairly young audience whose decreased literacy in turn rules out most subtitled movies.²² The Transnational trend in Hollywood involves films that are partly subtitled. As many former colonies speak English, these films have English as their spoken language, but with a somewhat different accent than what the American audience would be used to hearing. The director of *Blood Diamond*, Edward Zwick, decided to let the first few minutes of his film be subtitled, but when he figured the audience had gotten used to the accents, both the Sierra Leonean and the strong South African accent Leonardo DiCaprio brilliantly pulls off in the film, he decided to cut the subtitles.²³

Parts of *Babel* takes place in Morocco and is subtitled, and the part of the film taking place in Japan is entirely subtitled, yet again this film was a huge success both in the U.S. and worldwide. Though a larger audience saw *Babel* worldwide than in the U.S. it still indicates that American filmgoers too are receptive to subtitled films. It is a mantra that Americans hate them, but there are so few foreign films that are distributed in the U.S. that it hardly qualifies as a hard fact. Contrary to the Norwegian filmmaker Erik Skjoldberg, who had his neo-noir film *Insomnia*

(Skjoldberg, 1997 & Christopher Nolan, 2002) remade into a Hollywood version starring Al Pacino, Bent Hamer, also Norwegian, was lucky enough to have his film *O'Horten* (Hamer, 2007) distributed to a few American cinemas, making his film by more people in the U.S. than in Norway. This marks a change that is consistent with the Transnational trend, and enables of the American audience to hear other languages and read subtitles. As Rosenbaum points out it is hard to take the presumed audience resentment for subtitling as a proclaimed truth when "...a) most Americans have never seen a subtitled film, b) and few if any complained about the extensive use of subtitles in *Dances with Wolves* (Costner, 1990) or *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993), or stayed away from any of these films as a consequence."²⁴ The films within the Transnational trend, and their success, can further support that American audiences have not really had a fair chance of forming their own opinion on the matter. The lack of access to foreign films make Americans accept the isolation from the rest of the world, it is hard to be interested in something you do not know about. However, the Transnational trend in Hollywood delivers a more diverse world to its audience, although it is safely produced within the Hollywood paradigm, a point I will get back to later on.

In the early days of film most film workers, both on and off camera, were a multinational crowd. It was with the coming of sound that the spoken language of American film became a certain Standard American, making the films more American. As Robert Ray points out, "Hollywood films also became more American due to the usage of English as the only language, excluding actors unable to speak English. The movies thus drew on localized inflections and on aural map of the United States."²⁵ Standard American is also among the many different accents taught to students in acting schools both in the U.S and Great Britain, preparing them to act in Hollywood movies. Variations of the English accents have been used in movies to give characters different identities. One example is the character of Eve in the film *Three Faces of Eve* (Johnson, 1957) where the same person uses three different variations of English, portraying different natures of her three different personalities. Both of Eve's first two personalities have a Southern accent; however, Ms. Eve Black's accent is stronger than the original Eve White. This kind of accent adds uneducated to her personality, and for Eve White it stresses how she is subdued by her surroundings, whiles Eve Black's vulgar way of speaking might indicate, a rather

racist comment of the film, a resemblance to African-American women's way of talking at the time. However, the third personality of Eve, called Jane, has lost the Southern accent and speaks with a soft Eastern accent, often referred to as Standard American, and associated with educated people. In this film speech and accents were deliberately used in order to portray the ideal woman of the 1950s. This practice has been used in Hollywood so long that the audience is not very well equipped to listen to other accents without connection them to certain stereotypes. The typical bandits in Westerns would have a Spanish accent, and James Bond films are crowded with crooks with different accents. However, as mentioned above, Edward Zwick believed that the audience would get used to the different accents in the film *Blood Diamond* after a few minutes, and removed the subtitles. A survey among the Nordic countries showed that Norwegians are better equipped for understanding the other Nordic countries' languages than their neighboring countries. This is because Norwegians have a more trained ear from picking up all the various Norwegian accents. In contrast to Denmark and to some extent Sweden, Norway has made an effort to keep various dialects as part of the audio/visual broadcasting media. Danes and Swedes have more or less eliminated dialects and kept a standard language in their public sphere, thus making them less equipped to perceive different dialects.²⁶ The Americans and the British have cultivated a Standard American and Received Pronunciation of the English language, respectively. Like the Danes and Swedes they need to be trained in listening to different accents. The films of the Transnational trend are perhaps contributing to making Americans and other more accustomed to alternative variations of spoken English. With its non-Americanness the Transnational trend in Hollywood seems to prepare Hollywood and the American audience for new and different markets, taking in the outside world to a much greater extent than earlier. With the American presence in so many other countries and regions of the world it seems Hollywood producers have taken in the fact that films can be made from a different point of view. Traditionally differences in accents have often correlated with factors such as: social and class origin, religious affliction, educational level, and political grouping. People make use of accents to judge not only their social standing, but also their personality. Applied to cinema, the standard, neutral, and value-free accent maps onto the dominant cinema produced by the society's reigning mode of production. Though this neutral type of accent identifies the Hollywood

cinema, there has been a marked change on this practice in the Transnational trend. By definition, all alternative cinemas are accented, but that no longer goes as Hollywood has appropriated the identifier of Accented cinema.²⁷

2.3.4 Third World Cultures – Core/Periphery Drama

“Americans can no longer foster the illusion that what happens to the rest of the world doesn’t affect them”, says Raul Mahajan.²⁸ In a globalized world one is perhaps better equipped if one can understand both the language and the culture of a different world. According to Rosenbaum many Americans perceive everything outside the United States as somewhat unreal and every other country as a failed or imperfect version of the United States, which in turn enables them to disregard foreign films and different cultures. Transnational trend may be a reaction against such attitudes and takes Rosenbaums advice of considering foreign films as “cultural CARE packages”. The Transnational trend in Hollywood is also a cultural CARE package.²⁹ The world and its interconnectedness through trade, international organization’s involvement in humanitarian crises, tourism, all the elements forming the process of globalization contribute to enlighten an audience normally accustomed to American themes and characters. According to Ezra and Rowden “Transnational cinema arises in the interstices between the local and the global.”³⁰ The Transnational trend in Hollywood contributes to highlight why conflicts in another corner of the world is of concern to an American, or a Brit, or a Scandinavian person. It follows Beck’s thoughts of any conflict, any trade, any crisis is not a local any longer, it is glocal and of concern to us all. Bringing Hollywood to another corner of the world, to a world of periphery culture may be just another Americanization process of a new potential market, but it also speak the language a good many people can understand both visually and through audio conveying a message of a shared responsibility.

This shared responsibility, this sense of interconnectedness that all of these films are concerned with is exactly what makes them transnational and not international. *Babel* is literally transnational because it takes place in four different countries, however all the situations and people are somehow interconnected, so in this case the transnationality speaks for itself. In *Blood Diamond* you have the transnational presence of diamond trade, both within Africa, but also around the

world. In addition we see the heavy influence American gangster rappers have on the child soldiers in Sierra Leone, we see how those worlds are interconnected both through culture (the music) and the trade (the diamonds the gangsters wear and the soldiers trade). *Hotel Rwanda* deals with the paralyzed world society in the middle of a severe humanitarian crisis taking place in Rwanda in the late 1990s. Though the protagonist is from Rwanda the transnational society of the world today is very much present in the film, mainly represented through IOs such as the UN and the Red Cross. *Slumdog Millionaire* is much more of a feelgood film, even though scenes like the maiming of a child with acid is or the murder of the protagonist's mother, is as far from a good feeling as you could get, the film has focus on the opportunities that lies open for India and thus for a chai-wallah, or tea-boy, like Jamal from Mumbai, in a transnational space. The presence of the rest of the world is so much there, but from a different angle that what we are used to. The interconnectedness is portrayed in much more optimistic scenarios and gives room for hope rather than despair. By wrapping Third world cultures in easily recognized representations and symbols the Western audience will feel connected rather than disconnected to the events taking place here. The Transnational trend is thus aiding a sense of shared responsibility by hailing its audience through its cinematic apparatus.

2.3.5 Transnational Cinema

Hollywood has not been able, even wished, to stay immune towards the influence of the flows of cultural exchange that are transforming the ways people all over the world are watching and making films. In this respect, the most important influence in creating the Transnational trend in Hollywood has been the competition posed by other film making centers. Transnational cinema has factored the problematics of "World cinema" into Hollywood productions and these problematics are one important identifier of this trend. The Transnational trend in Hollywood arises in the interstices between the local and the global. There is a general bond between the different groups in these films, a bond that fosters trans-local understandings. These understandings are not a unity that lump all sites together in opposition to a de-individualizing global force, but rather bonds of recognition of each other's differences and similarities. The trend is influenced by Transnational cinema in the way that it does not treat "Third Worldism" in the traditional sense of creating a gap

between the Western world and the Third World in a classic Us/Them problematique. This trend rather moves beyond this discourse and operates in the in-between spaces of culture, in other words between the local and the global – the glocal. Areas such as immigration, exile, political asylum, tourism, terrorism and technology are explored in the trend and create portraits of the real world based on its technological future. Films within this trend tend to portray disenfranchised people who gain greater access to the means of global representation.

Due to the great accessibility cinema as medium enjoys and worldwide audiences' increased cinematic literacy, film is rapidly replacing literature as the predominant means of cultural legitimation and cultural critique. This helps explain the need for Hollywood to take on the Transnational trend and the way it has appropriated themes and stories already touch upon within Transnational cinema. One of those topics is disenfranchised people caught in the cracks of globalization, and like Transnational cinema the genre also very often touch the topic of loss. "Loneliness is an inevitable outcome of transnationality, and it finds its way into the desolate structures of feeling and lonely diegetic characters."³¹ Displacement is a signifier of the Transnational trend, and the displaced person makes out the grounds for the transnational in these films, both in terms of global awareness and thematically. This kind of displacement reflects transnationalism in a poetic way; many of the films display the lack of belonging somewhere in a place where citizenry is beyond recognition thus making the characters unable to identify something to call home. In the early stages of the trend the displaced person is often represented by a soldier deployed in a foreign country, and later on in the development line the displacement is evident in immigrants, tourists, and other identities that are deconstructed and reconstructed along the lines of mobility. The sense of being "out of place" is figured strongly within the trend, this is exemplified very well through all the four stories told in the film *Babel* (2007). Here we witness the displacement of the tourist couple in Morocco, the illegal Mexican immigrant in the USA, the alienated teenager in Japan, and the innocent boy shepherds turned terrorist suspects in Morocco.

In the first part of the Transnational trend the films often problematized American national and cultural identities in the "non-spaces" of war-zones, focusing on the American identity in relation to a transnational space of IOs and the nation

state of where the actual conflict is taking place. It redefines American identity as part of a transnational space, and the American role in a globalized world. Traditionally terrorism has been treated as banditry and illicit moneymaking in many U.S and European films; however, this has changed in the Transnational trend. Particularly in the late stage of the trend, from 2006 and onwards terrorism has developed to be treated with more complex set ups than earlier. In *Babel* terrorism is treated in a way that the terrorist act is not a terrorist act, but a clash of civilizations due to an innocent game. This representation of terrorism questions the earlier polarization discourse of all Americans as potential victims and all “foreigners” as potential victimizers that many earlier films portrayed. In *Babel* this discourse is even openly critiqued as it is made very clear to the audience how media’s and American official’s rhetoric on the matter is contributing to intensify the situation and the polarization between the two countries. The films in the Transnational trend present a loss of innocence as in regards to seeing U.S. foreign policy and military involvement overseas as black and white, good and evil. In the early films within the trend war films were used to exemplify the complexity of humanitarian intervention, nation building and involvement in international operations and international law. Later on it developed story lines that would treat typical war themes, such as terrorism and armed conflicts but with more focus on the humanitarian element of it, the global responsibilities of such conflicts, and how it is all interconnected through trade and the global capitalist system. It is evident in this trend that the role of America(ns) is displaced in the present world that cannot be read in terms of good and evil. In its search for a (moral) identity in the global village, these films have adopted the sense of displacement of Westerners in Third world cultures.

The Transnational trend in Hollywood is made up of many of the same components as Transnational cinema, and with that also Third Cinema, Accented and Displaced cinema. Accented cinema is termed an engagé cinema and its engagement is with specific individuals, ethnicities, nationalities, and identities, as is the Transnational trend. In other words the trend deals with specifics rather than general masses and the people, which mean that it fits with Hollywood’s paradigm of making a general topic into a personal melodrama. The films within this trend therefore take on private personal stories that, at the same time, are kept at a social and public level thematically.

All the films in the Transnational trend are, as Third Cinema and Accented cinema, historically conscious, politically engaged, critically aware, and generically hybridized. This means that they contradict the claim that Hollywood films are "...are realistic and intended for entertainment only, and thus free from overt ideology or accent."³² Hollywood has, in other words, constructed new social and aesthetic spaces as a result of a rapid corporate transnationalization of media and an emerging transnationalism. As cosmopolitanism is the key tropes for contemporary identity it is only natural for Hollywood to embrace transnational awareness.³³

All Hollywood films are produced in the Postindustrial system and the films produced in the "Accented Style" are alternative modes of productions existing side by side with the dominant mode of cultural production taking place in Hollywood.³⁴ Despite having adopted some of the conventions of Accented cinema, the mode of production has not changed and thus the dominant and the alternative modes of cultural production will continue to exist in parallel to each other.

2.3.6 The Formal and Thematic Paradigm of Hollywood

On a general basis all the films within the Transnational trend in Hollywood is in keeping with what Robert Ray refers to as Hollywood's "certain tendency" – American culture's Imaginary. This Imaginary is a particular store of myths and representations that are, in a Lacanian way, what constitutes the specific American personality. Ray claims that no film with any hope of commercial successful can afford to fall outside the thematic paradigm of Hollywood. In order to operate within this paradigm it is necessary to draw from popular mythology and well-established artistic conventions in American popular culture. Those films that are not produced by the accepted Hollywood norm will fall short and be recognized as amateurish and less real. These standards are dictated by market forces and decide what is real, and as most American films are made from the standard norms of invisibility, continuity, and based on American ideology and myths they obtain huge commercial success both domestically and worldwide.³⁵ Speaking of the period of Classic Hollywood, which lay down the foundations for the accepted norm of filmmaking in Hollywood, Ray further comments that: "Hollywood's challenge lay in developing rules of condensation and displacement that would work for the audience as a whole, or, to put it another way, that would provide immediately (albeit unconsciously) recognizable

objective (?) correlatives for the common wishes and fears of the mass audience. Hollywood's enormous success proves that it has met this challenge."³⁶ And his has still today met this challenge, now even on a global level. Hollywood's tendency to repeat what has always worked is closely linked to the financial structure of Hollywood, which is based on reaching a broad and regular audience. In order to achieve that Hollywood would consistently return to the basic ideologies and myths of American culture. The film in the ongoing Transnational trend in Hollywood are according to this in danger of becoming commercial failures, at least at first glance. Taking place elsewhere than the U.S. and with non-American protagonists call for withdrawal from another bank than the American culture's "Imaginary bank" and thus risk becoming a failure and regarded unimportant. However, the films within this trend are all drawing on the same "Imaginary bank" that Ray is referring to. Though the theme has become transnational the films still communicate with what are the common wishes and fears of the mass audience. The films have the action, the romance, family values, and religious perspectives, struggle for justice and freedom as any other major Hollywood production would consist of.³⁷

It is perhaps not so hard to explain why most of the studios labeled these films "risk projects" and the marketing strategies aimed at a narrow audience. At first glance, yes, these films were outside the formal paradigm of Hollywood. *Hotel Rwanda* starred one American star; Nick Nolte and he was not even the protagonist. According to Ray American film industry operates mainly with feature-length, big-budget fictional narratives using stars.³⁸ *Hotel Rwanda* was based on a true story and the protagonist was a relatively unknown actor. The film, which is an independent film distributed by United Artists, got a great reception at its American release, which might be explained by two factors. One, the film dealt with American military involvement in a humanitarian operation run by the UN and thus touching the topic of multilateral operations which was a hot potato at the time of the film's release. Second, the film is told as a personal narrative of the main character Paul Rusesabagina, it is thus in keeping with Hollywood's tradition of turning a larger topic into a personal drama. Both *Blood Diamond* and *Babel* used big stars in order to promote their films. *Slumdog Millionaire* managed to become a huge success without any know American actors or internationally acclaimed stars. This might be interpreted as the paradigm of Hollywood in this trend is altered on some levels.

However, the stars of *Babel* and *Blood Diamond* can be said to have carved out the possibilities for a transnational film to become a success even without stars.

Nonetheless, even though films in the Transnational trend are breaking some of the norms of filmmaking, they all originate from the Hollywood melodrama. They are all centered round a dilemma attempted to be solved, they all deal with the locating of the repressed anxiety and wishes behind the overdetermined dream image. According to Ray each variation of the thematic paradigm of Hollywood "...could pose issues only in terms allowed by the prevailing ideology..."³⁹ According to Ulrich Beck the prevailing ideology of the world today is the ideology of neoliberalism. By using the "...existing body of mythic oppositions provided it by the local culture..."⁴⁰ the Hollywood formula has managed to obtain its transnational success. In the Transnational trend the filmmakers have responded to the prevailing ideology of today and based their stories in the myths and artistic conventions communicating with this ideology. Following Ray's idea that myths and artistic conventions are "...socially produced and consumed, and thus always implicated in ideology..."⁴¹ Adding Beck's views of what is the prevailing ideology – globalism - where culture, ecology, politics, civil society are all under the sway of the world-market system, we can draw the conclusion that the Transnational trend is communicating with myths and artistic conventions responding to the globalization process. These myths then need to take into account universal myths as much as local myths and symbols in order to obtain some kind of authenticity. The aesthetic of the Transnational trend is formed by the third cultures emerging from sovereign national states being criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities, and networks.⁴² As the large Hollywood studios are increasingly multinational conglomerates, it is natural that stories emerging from Hollywood will mirror this kind of multinationality, however without losing the certain tendency that forms Hollywood's thematic and formal paradigm.

The films in the Transnational trend follow the formal paradigm of Hollywood. All the components of *mise-en-scène* are followed and the invisible style of all stylistic choices is consistent with the American tradition of realism. American cinema has always prided itself in giving its audience the "...optimum vantage point of what is occurring on screen..."⁴³ The transparency of the aesthetic conventions in these films is so real that the audience is able to identify with the protagonist and

other characters despite them being non-American. By repeating the successful formulae of Hollywood so many times over, the audience is receptive to what they recognize as real. Whether this reality is in Morocco, Africa or Japan is of lesser importance as the audience accepts the illusion by agreeing to the conventions of filmmaking. According to the French psychologist Mannoni the belief in an illusion rests on identification with some element of the illusion. An American and a Western audience are able to find those elements of recognition in the Transnational trend because of the keeping of the formal paradigm of mise-en-scène and editing, and that they uphold the notion of suture that American cinema has the tradition of performing on its audience. They are also hailed by these films because of the Western presence that is present in all of these films, make the theme not local, but glocal. In other words the stories told are of concern to all of us due to the interconnectedness of the world through globalization, which is made very obvious in these films.

According to Ray the thematic conventions of Hollywood convert all political, sociological, and economic dilemmas into personal melodramas. All the films in the transnational trend uphold these criteria. There is always one person representing some overall issue or dilemma. The journey rests on the individual, which is rooted in the American tradition of self-reliance. The films follow the Classic Hollywood's basic thematic procedure, namely: raising and then appearing to solve problems associated with the troubling incompatibility of traditional American myths. This pattern is referred to as a reconciliatory pattern, and films that do not follow this pattern often fail to attract big crowds.⁴⁴ American cinema trades on oppositions, and the American psychological pattern is said to be "...some tentative combination of dynamic polarities..."⁴⁵, the films in the Transnational trend seem to have embraced these conventions to a greater extent. This may be the case due to the risk they are already running of not hitting home with the American audience. But, how is it possible to transfer American myths and an American psyche to non-American cultures and people? I believe that there are several reasons why this does not fall through. Some would probably point out that this is exactly these film's weaknesses, for instance the director of *Slumdog Millionaire*, Danny Boyle, was criticized for not having more Bollywood elements present in his film, leaving the famous Bollywood dancing to the very end of the film just prior to the credits. However, from a commercial point of view the films in the Transnational trend mark a shift in

Hollywood by having non-American protagonists and locations, at its present position in its development line it seems to not have afforded itself to be exposed to more risk than they already are, consequently resulting in clinging to Hollywood's thematic paradigm and artistic conventions. Thus, these films reflect "...the most fundamental American beliefs in individualism, ad hoc solutions, and the impermanence of political problems."⁴⁶

Further, the Transnational trend follows the thematic paradigm in the reconciliatory pattern portraying the individual man attempting to keep from being drawn into action on any but his own terms.⁴⁷ Modern cinema portrayed a hero that believed in the power to influence or transform society. Within the postmodern era of American cinema the role of the hero changed. According to Carl Boggs and Jack Pollard there was a marked shift in American cinema during the 1960s due to the shift in the material and ideological life of America, which altered the images of social reality, filmmaking techniques among other things. It also altered the way issues around the traditional myths and values of family, sexuality, work and politics were dealt with.⁴⁸ In the Transnational trend the male protagonists have progressed from being indifferent, resigned, or complicit to actively intervening for the good of others rather than the self, in the events going on around them. These films then, and the characters at their heart, are all about the individual confronted with the unconscionable, the unthinkable: the most terrible of circumstances. There is a tendency of a glorification of the male hero, and there is a learning curve in these films of moving away from the laissez-faire diplomacy towards the favoring of social activism.⁴⁹ This type of male protagonist emerged in the films released post-9/11 with the Transnational trend. In a sense it might seem like the male protagonists of this trend has made a revisit to the heroes of the Classic Hollywood and serve as a reaction to the postmodern cinematic hero's ineptness. Morality is according to Westwell the most significant component part of the contemporary cultural imagination of war.⁵⁰ The moral universe in almost all war movies are, according to Westwell, posed as a struggle between elemental forces of good and evil which serves the reception of Americans as only fighting for survival and virtue, and only when gravely wronged. This can, according to Westwell, only stem from "...appreciation of the complex, self-interested, often economic, motivations influencing America's entry into wars past and present."⁵¹ The Transnational trend has taken on the complex security threats

and issues affecting the world society and the global economy today and thus portraying both situations and characters that are less easily defined under the terms of good or evil, both a mix of making moral less certain. Transnational actors in armed conflicts and in the era of corporate power are posing far more complex scenarios than a fight between good and evil, it also leaves the protagonists with less black and white solvable dilemmas. In the post-9/11 era one of the characteristic developments of the hero was a revival of the “*reluctant hero*.”⁵² This hero emerged as a response to the complex and uncertain morality. The focus is thus a mixture of the typical war cinema morale, the post-9/11 film’s explorations of the U.S. moral grammar of war, and the new element of a greater sense of collectivism and social engagement.

Slumdog Millionaire has often been called an Indian *Forrest Gump*. It is true, it has clear parallels to the beloved American film *Forrest Gump* (Zemeckis, 1994), it has the same optimism and naiveté about it and it is filled with hope for the future. *Slumdog Millionaire* gives us an insight to the fantastical world of India, and gives us hope for upward social mobility for a “slumdog” like Jamal to advance precisely due to opportunities globalization has brought upon India. The hope that is given us of political influence of an individual is hard not to consider a false one when we know that the process of globalization and increased power of transnational corporate actors are diminishing that very political influence of each individual. However, this is in keeping with the Hollywood paradigm in that it supports the ideology that serves its purposes as a business. We are presented with solutions and hopes of how to produce a well functioning system within the terms of globalization. These are issues I will deal with in both the case studies of the films and in later chapters in this thesis. The positive and optimistic note that we witness in some of the films in the Transnational trend, are in tune with the Classic Hollywood’s thematic paradigm. American cinema’s version of its traditional mythology rested on two factors according to Ray; “First, Hollywood’s power (and need) to produce a steady flow of variations provided the myth with repetitive elaborations that it required to become convincing. Second, the audience’s sense of American exceptionalism (in part authentic, in part itself the product of the myth) encouraged acceptance of a mythology whose fundamental premise was optimistic.”⁵³ This optimism is very much present in *Slumdog Millionaire*, which is the least “American” of the films in the Transnational

trend as it has no American characters of greater importance in it. It is possible that if the trend continues, we would see more of this kind of optimism attached to Third world topics, rather than the conflict based films we tend to link to Third world cultures. Whether this development is a positive tendency or whether it is something we should be critical of remains to be seen. If *Slumdog Millionaire* was a non-repetitive project of celebrating the happy side of the Mumbaian slum, then perhaps we can let it go. However, if there is a continuous neglect of dealing with the downside of globalization it is perhaps worth offering the critical opinion of Hollywood projecting its ideology through feel-good “Slum Chic”.

In the next chapter I will explore cinematic influences from modern and postmodern cinema in Hollywood and the cinematic shift 9/11 brought on.

CHAPTER 3

Influences from Modern, Postmodern and Post-9/11 Cinema

3.0 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter I go through the cinematic influences that have helped form the Transnational trend. In the first part I focus on the similarities and differences between the Transnational trend and traditions in modern and postmodern Hollywood film. In the second part of this chapter I look at how the incident of 9/11 marked a shift in American film which laid to ground foundation for the trend. 9/11 had a huge impact not only on the American society but it also called for a reinvention of Hollywood and its communication with the rest of the world.

Finally in this chapter I have briefly commented on multinational director's influence on American filmmaking, particularly those from periphery cultures.

3.1 Influence Modern and Postmodern Cinema

Films made in the period where modernity was the dominating rationale reflected the modernistic values of progress, optimism, nurturing norms such as individualism, competition, hard work, material self-interest, and upward social mobility. These films upheld realism, with strong male heroes struggling against overwhelming odds, were rooted in ideals such as capitalist industrialism, liberal democracy, national identity, and a pragmatic business culture.⁵⁴ Modernism, inspired by Enlightenment, provided values that were in accordance with the essence of America, the principles of individual freedom and democracy. In a political atmosphere of bipolar thinking and clear competing ideologies it was a necessity to have clear ideological images to identify with or reject. Right and wrong, good and bad were notions that were less distorted than what they would become, and it was easier to orient yourself in the landscape of politics, gender and values. This period's main influential filmmakers were Griffith, Chaplin, Eisenstein and Pudovkin, who all influenced what would become the Hollywood paradigm of presenting a social reality in accordance with the dominating ideology at the time. The stories presented were often depictions of

struggles between good and evil where “...(typically male) protagonists stood for coherent values and where redemption (both individual and collective) always seemed possible.”⁵⁵ The combat and Western genres were the most popular from the 1930s to the 1960s, in these films the hero had the “...capacity to decisively influence or transform society, or at least stand tall against enormous odds”⁵⁶, something that change drastically in the following period of postmodern cinema. Film such as John Ford’s *Stagecoach* (Ford, 1939) and Frank Capra’s *Mr. Smith Goes to Hollywood* (Capra, 1939) are some of the films that can be said to be rather typical of this period.

Films by directors such as Fritz Lang, Wilder, Hitchcock, and Welles had great influence in this period however in a more mixed sense. The Noir-cycle in the 1940s and 1950s were critical towards the positivism that infused the films and society at the time and displayed the dark and tragic sense of American life. Drawing on crime stories from the 1930s that were colored by the period of Depression, and the post-war anxiety that was notable from the mid 1940s, the noir cycle films explored the dystopic side of modernism and society. These films were treated as risk projects by the larger studios and were mainly produced as B-movies with small budgets. This may stem from the dark portrayal these films had of the assembly line America and on the positive work values of the Horatio Alger myth. These films stand out as a stark contrast to for instance Douglas Sirk’s films *All That Heaven Allows* (Sirk, 1955) and *Imitation of Life* (Sirk, 1959), which emphasize the moral, and values America’s bourgeoisie held at the time.⁵⁷ These films came to be one of the main influences for the neo-noir films emerging within post-modern cinema, particularly in the mid 1990s with films such as *Pulp Fiction* (Tarrantino, 1994) and *Reservoir Dogs* (Tarrantino, 1992) by Quentin Tarantino, but also earlier films in the post-modern era such as Polanski’s *Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974) and Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976). The Hobbesian way of interpreting society shaping the noir cycle, a world of chaos and distrust, can be said to have laid the ground for the post-modern reaction to modernist cinema.

After the Second World War, America entered a period of reshaping America’s image by embracing capitalism and democracy as the main ideologies, forming an opposition to the USSR and its ideology of Communism. In this competition for ideologies fear was one instrument used to gain trust and influence. The film industry was strongly cleansed for any leftist ideas during the harsh period of McCarthyism in

the mid 50s. This led to a very cleansed mode of production resulting in films with the proper and patriotic ideological messages.

With the counterculture in the 1960s and the loss of belief in politicians, politics and the system as a result of the Watergate scandal and the war in Vietnam a new type of films started to emerge. *The New Hollywood* was influenced by directors such as Scorsese, Coppola, Altman, and Polanski to mention some. These drew on the New French Wave, especially Godard who reinvented cinematic forms with each new film he made, breaking with the Hollywood paradigm of transparency. The New Hollywood directors experimented heavily with the new cinematic forms, and were extremely creative in finding new ways of incorporating the cinema vérité with the classical Hollywood standard form of filmmaking. This process led to productions outside the control of the large studios, as the auteurs systematically challenged the hierarchical studio system. According to Boggs and Pollard the postmodern shift paved way for a series of films that "...subverted the very idea of structured narratives, questioned the emphasis on conventional heroes, thematically criticized the simple Enlightenment view of progress, offered a mainly unflattering American society, and experimented with new technical and stylistic approaches that brought novelty to the cinema."⁵⁸ Not only the technical side of filmmaking changed in this period, marking the start of the post-modern age. In short, the period from the late 1960s was dominated by a change in ideology, from being well defined to becoming very diverse. In this process film also lost its clear ideological message and postmodern cinema cut across familiar ideologies and discourses.⁵⁹ Perhaps the most important consequence of this was the universe emerging from this discourse namely a "... universe of alienated social relations, moral ambiguity, and elusive representations that gave old-fashioned protagonists little hope of carving out spheres of autonomy or winning the day."⁶⁰ This resulted in films with extreme violence, experimentation with sexuality and gender roles, and questioning of all established norms, institutions, ideologies etc. Film serves as a very suitable medium for studying shifts in American cultural and political life, thus we can read this shift in American cinema as a shift reflecting the political mode at the time.

The same way that noir was a deviation from the modernist thought the 1980s had a surge of neo-modernist films as the studios recuperated their lost power. However, the New Hollywood's creative mode had made its impact on filmmaking

and represented the postmodern discourse that came back with a vengeance in the 1990s. With directors such as Oliver Stone, David Lynch, Spike Lee, the Choen brothers, to mention but a few, the independent filmmaking continued to hold its grasp on the production mode of the decades to come. One of the main consequences of this period is, according to Boggs and Pollard, the depolitization of the American society, thus also the American films being produced.

The Transnational trend in Hollywood has in many respects returned to some of the typical modernist values. After 9/11 America's definition of good and bad, right and wrong got more complicated than ever. Humanitarian intervention, nation building, justification of action to IOs, all of these elements emphasized the grey zones of morale, and particularly the American morale. In this process it seems that Hollywood for a period, and particularly within the Transnational trend, lost its sense of humor and irony. Everything became very serious very fast. In this process Hollywood seemed to return to some of the modernist values, but not being able to free itself from postmodern values that had persisted for so long, the new flow of films became a sort of hybridization of the two sets of values. As these sets are more or less contradictory to each other, one set of morale persists in the end. For example the male protagonist who sacrifices himself for the greater good is a return to modernist film's portrayal of male heroes. There is a development in characters from being the typical postmodern cynic looking out for him self, to becoming the moral character making redemption possible. In *Blood Diamond* we see Archer sacrificing himself for the cause and for his friend, however he does not do so until he realizes that all is lost for him anyway. By doing so he saves a whole family, and he reinstates hope in political action through IOs. This makes this film cling to both modern and postmodern values, with the first trumping the dystopic view in the end.

The distinctive cultural radicalism that shapes the postmodern cinema is according to Pollard and Boggs rarely politically radical, it seldom "...offers a systematic critique of the status quo, depicts forms of collective action, or embrace an alternative vision of social progress."⁶¹ This trend seems to have changed slightly in this respect, not only due to a dystopic fatigue but as a consequence of 9/11 and its realization of what political malpractice and a lack of critique can lead to. It seems that Hollywood has picked up on the general increased social awareness that follows the environmental debate of climate change, sustainable fashion, and fair trade. This

trend among the American populace, and worldwide, seem to have created a space for Hollywood to react against the depoliticized era of postmodernity and the discourse of individuals not being able to make a difference. As Hollywood is specializing in what we know best, and recognize as ourselves, it is only natural for Hollywood to pick something old and something even older, wrap it in something new (Third world) and present it as the issues we now are concerned with. According to Pollard and Boggs, trends in Hollywood “both reflect and influence the larger sociohistorical environment within which movies are produced, distributed, viewed, and critically assessed.”⁶² The new wrapping of the repetitive Hollywood formulae reflects the change in the sociohistorical environment 9/11 led to.

Though the lack of engagement and collectivism is fading out in the Transnational trend, there are other trends stemming from globalization and postmodern cinema that are most definitely kept intact. Pollard and Boggs suggest these trends to be: “widespread economic misery, a culture of violence, growing social polarization, stifling bureaucratic controls and surveillance, rampant corporate power, global ecological crisis, the rapid spread of military weaponry, terrorism, and deepening personal alienation in all spheres of daily life...”⁶³ The same issues stemming from the globalization process are the very same basic issues for the films in the Transnational trend as they were for postmodern films, this they have in common.

Cinema, by virtue of its great cultural power in American society, tends to revolve around sites of ideological investment in so far as it represents particular images of the social-life world. Pollard and Boggs say that these images consist of “...class and material relations; gender, romance and sexuality; politics and governance; race and ethnicity; the allure of collective beliefs; a vision of hero-protagonists; the understanding of violence in society...”⁶⁴ Though films in the Transnational trend carry on projecting these kinds of images there are marked changes that represent a departure from some of the dystopic values that have formed the typical postmodern cinema. The Transnational trend is a result of both modern and postmodern cinema, but also of the destabilizing event of 9/11. The next level of evolution in this trend seems to be an exploration of other points of view. This has led to a change in some of the typical images of American cinematic use, which traditionally has had its basis in American society and territory. It has moved

outwards to a more global point of view, thus a flow of more international and multinational images is present in Hollywood. It has also taken on a more critical and political tone than what Boggs and Pollard describe as the dominant trend for postmodern cinema, perhaps as a result of adopting the more serious tone developed in the post-9/11 era and also as a reaction to the political malpractice of the Bush administration. The Transnational trend does not aim to provide a political radicalism. Hollywood is merely reflecting the trends of both the American and the global populace in that there seem to be an increased level of awareness on certain global issues. Hollywood responds to currents in society, and society responds to the narratives of Hollywood, it would be strange if the global issues of politics, trade, tourism, diplomacy, and ecological crisis would not be on the agenda of Hollywood. Following Pollard and Boggs' argument that the great promises upheld by modernity inspired by Enlightenment rationality have run aground on the most powerful trends at work today: globalization, corporate expansion, bureaucratic and technological controls, ecological crisis, social atomization, and perhaps most of all, militarism, the Transnational trend seem to further explore these areas in search of an answer to solve the global riddle.⁶⁵ These trends are not new, but events surrounding 9/11 have exacerbated such trends, and they seem to continue within the Transnational trend, however, the angle of approach is different.

There are five general trends within the cinematic postmodernism according to Pollard and Boggs. These are: 1) The blockbuster spectacle, 2) the theme of existential morass pervasive in earlier film noir and neo-noir films, 3) emphasis on the uniquely American slide into historical quagmire and with it the vanishing of classic hero-protagonist, 4) a turn toward the motif of Hobbesian disorder and chaos, 5) embellishment of a "ludic" or theatrically playful cinema where little is valued or held sacred, where conventional norms and rules are subject to irreverent mockery.⁶⁶ America lost some of its humor in the process of 9/11 and its aftermath. Comedians found it hard to find a way to joke about the incident, and the Patriot Act contributed to censor most of the few possibilities of comical approaches on the matter, or how the Bush administration handled it. In this sense some of the films released post-9/11 lost some of the "ludic" or theatrically playful cinema fostered in the era of postmodern cinema. The renunciation of serious cinematic discourse allowed for a sort of nihilism where anything goes, in the Transnational trend this type of

playfulness is not so evident. Not only are the issues dealt with serious in content but the personal dramas being played out are also disturbingly true and universal, making the satirical domain of postmodernity victim of renunciation. This more serious tone was initially the tone of the Transnational trend, however, it has now reached the point where it allows for a kind of naïve feel-good ludicity as shown in *Slumdog Millionaire*. The films in the trend still portray the disorder and chaos of the postmodern cinema, but at the same time they end on a string of hope, providing us not with a Hobbesian sense of a dark future, but with a sense of power to change what is not functioning in the world society. The films thus provide both a sense of critique of the neoliberal ideologies and the consequences of globalization, but rest on the notion of caring as the instrument of change, leaving us with the impression that the system works as it is.

Pollard and Boggs argue that there are no international or domestic trends that attempt to reverse or block the global capitalist patterns of production and consumption that create what they refer to as a Hobbesian morass, however, it is my argument that though perhaps not in the fashion that Pollard and Boggs had wished for, the Transnational trend indicates some sort of reaction. These films are not an attempt to block or reverse the destructive aspects of globalization, but nonetheless they constitute some sort of attempt of reorientation and redefining of values and responsibilities in a global world society. In other words, the films in the transnational trend are not rejecting the system of neoliberal capitalism, but show its audience alternative ways of navigating within it. This is the main difference between the postmodern cinema and the Transnational trend, this trend does in fact embrace globalization and leaves us with a hope of the future within the existing system rather than portraying a dystopic view of the future.

Postmodern cinema taps into a deep psychological anxiety raising hard questions about the role of government, the media, the family, and personal relationships in a society of disorder. Within the Transnational trend this flow of questions continue, but have been brought forward into the transnational space of a world society. The critical questions, critiquing a corrupt social order, set up a mode of entrapment. This entrapment is now not only within the American society but also within the order that dominates the world, it is a reflection of globalization.⁶⁷ While the postmodern cinema has had a tendency to focus on the hyperreal, which

essentially constitutes “...“non-events” that are mediated through a commodified popular culture and communication systems that dwells on images, surface appearances, and spectacles”⁶⁸, the Transnational trend has so far had a tendency to focus more on the “real”. The trend, emerging in the immediate post-9/11 period with real events as its basis, formed the trend’s basis in the real events of global issues. *Blood Diamond* takes place in the real civil war in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s and focuses on real issues such as trade in illegal diamonds (blood diamonds). *Babel* features four different stories and portrays both scenarios that have basis in reality and basis in the fears we have due to events of 9/11 and globalization. There seem to be a marked difference between the general tendency in postmodern film and the transnational trend that perhaps has its origin from the effects of 9/11.

In postmodern cinema many powerful myths of contemporary American society are pushed aside. Perhaps most noteworthy is the notion that any individual can, with just the right mixture of work ethic, motivation, and fortune, create his own personal destiny.⁶⁹ If there are more films to come in the Transnational trend, it is reason to believe that this is about to change. The complex heroes of postmodern cinema, which consists of both good and bad, fighting problems that are complex components of less clear solutions, did already take a different turn in the films emerging in the post-9/11 period. In the Transnational trend the characters are also victims of powerlessness making them slaves to the system rather than individuals who operate on their own accord. However, these characters are also showing signs of being individuals capable of change and capable of forming his, or her, own destiny. In spite of the system critique, these films also project strands of hope within the system through increased social mobility, transnational communication and understanding, freer float of information/truths, and possibilities of justice through self-sacrifice. If many of the theories laid forward by some of the scholars I have referred to here are right then Hollywood will also eventually reflect Obama’s belief that “Yes, we can”⁷⁰ and his “Audacity of Hope”⁷¹, and that the morale and work ethic will be able to pull the hero a long way. It is not only within the Transnational trend that these attitudes are starting to emerge, even though Jamal in *Slumdog Millionaire* is the very symbol of hope and morale as a tool to form his own destiny, these qualities are also evident in other new films that are not within the Transnational trend, such as *Michael Clayton* (Gilroy, 2007) to mention one. Though the milieus and systems surrounding the

characters of these films are brutal, corrupted and unmoral the heroes win through because they are not, this is something that is very different from the Hobbesian dystopic of postmodern cinema.⁷² Nonetheless, Hollywood – no matter how reflective of society, is, and will always be, a market driven industry that depends on the system of capitalism. No film will ever oppose to that system, as a dog will never bite the hand that feeds it. Though this trend may seem like, or even be, a positive consequence of globalization, it is important to remember that Hollywood is fairly conservative and the U.S. still holds a hegemonic position of soft power.⁷³

3.2 Post-9/11 Cinema

According to Cynthia Weber the United States lost its innocence thanks to a surprise attack at a moment of US history when the rhetoric of isolationism was in play.⁷⁴ The Transnational trend might be interpreted as a reaction against this type of isolationism that was fostered within “fortress America”. The confusion around America’s moral certainty caused by the 9/11 attacks was as certain as where the American moral could be located prior to 9/11, namely in the outward projection of US power. Weber says that: “Whether characterized through America’s global military superiority or through its neoliberal capitalist policies of globalization, the United States projected a triumphalist moral standpoint.”⁷⁵ Everything that had been the basis for the cynicism, irony and sarcasm of the postmodern cinema was heavily toned down in the immediate period post-9/11. Combining clash-of civilizations arguments with cowboy posturing, the U.S. declared a “war on terror” and its supporting “axis of evil”. The immediate reaction to the attacks was, at least from the official U.S., not one that was toned with cosmopolitan values.⁷⁶ However, the films following in this period took a more moral stand, and were dealing with more seriousness than what Pollard and Boggs refers to as the lucidity of postmodern cinema. There seemed to be a sort of return to realism and heroes in reach of redemption, which was the norm of films from the modernist period in Hollywood. The U.S. was dealing with a new type of enemy and needed to reinvent its own discourse, or moral grammar of war, was introduced in order to justify its reaction to the 9/11 attacks. The U.S. was dealing with an enemy that was less like a traditional enemy in realist terms and more like an international firm, projecting its hypermasculin influence and power on a transnational level. This challenge called for

different strategies of foreign policy and military strategy, and it also called for a reorientation of a US “we” as opposed to “them”. According to Weber Al Qaeda’s strategy of war both mirrors and exploits a neoliberal economic strategy, which confuses the U.S.⁷⁷ Unable to see the potential threat the economic openness of neoliberal capitalism poses, the U.S failed to predict the activities of Al Qaeda which has exploited the transnational spaces made available to them through the globalization process. The Transnational trend, which has sprung out both as a reaction to postmodern cinema and a result of 9/11, has taken this truism into account and explores the many quagmires of globalization. The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center symbolized America’s masculine projection of cultural power made possible by economic power. Al Qaeda targeted the symbolic power of United States-led neoliberal globalization by targeting the Twin Towers.⁷⁸ The other cultural power of America is the media conglomerates, which is also dependent on the economic openness of neoliberalism, it is therefore in their interest to project films that explore areas of globalization and its transnational spaces that can prove harmful towards its logic, the films in the Transnational trend thus serve the system and increases an awareness that can aid the struggle against the transnational terrorist groups. In other words, the Transnational trend can in many ways be read as a weapon of the soft-power held by the U.S.

The crucial element of the post-9/11 era was Americans’ need to find out why someone hated them so much, and the need to redefine their self-understanding of what it means to be American. The events of September 11, 2001 shook US self-understandings to their very core and rendered another rethinking of US morality possible. A retrospective discourse emerged, concerning itself with who “Americans” are, what “America” represents to the rest of the world, and what Americans and the U.S. might be in this new world order.⁷⁹ The Transnational trend has pursued this discourse and has progressed from using narratives within the military realm into the civilian realm in its process. It has also transferred the revision from a domestic point of view to a non-domestic point of view in search of answers to who America is in the world, and how the world functions in the realm of the transnational.

The Bush administration’s official response to who the American’s are was: “we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world”⁸⁰ and “they” are “the axis of evil”.⁸¹ The film *We Were Soldiers* (Wallace, 2002) can be used to

exemplify the parallels between the moral time of the Vietnam War and the time between 9/11 and the Bush administration's articulation of "either you are with us or you are against us"-discourse. The film portrays a lack of terms for a new morality as a result of the atrocities in the Vietnam War, this communicates with the same sense of lack that occurred in the immediate period after 9/11. The terms of new morality had yet to be articulated and in order to articulate this morality many post-9/11 films attempted to re-establish the moral claim of the soldier by looking at the morally less certain post-Vietnam period.⁸² In this period the stress of humanitarian justification for military interventions became a powerful tool to gain public support. According to Janne Haaland Matlary public opinion and public diplomacy matter far more than before for foreign and security policy.⁸³ This supports the claim that humanitarian intervention are key to morally justified, or justifiable, interventions and the key to rescuing the U.S. from the moral morass that is its post-Vietnam legacy.⁸⁴

As both the first two battles in the war on terror were justified by the Bush administration as part on humanitarian grounds, *Behind Enemy Lines* (Moore, 2001), *Black Hawk Down* (Scott, 2001) and *Kandahar* (Makhmalbaf, 2001) exemplify the humanitarianism that became centre-piece for the US foreign policy post 9/11. These films function as a trajectory for "becoming a moral America(n)" in the post-9/11 era. What *Behind Enemy Lines* tells us is that what is right is to defend humanity by preventing genocide. According to this logic, if U.S. wars are humanitarian then U.S. wars are just, thus this film helped justify both many of the US military interventions of the 1990s and the war on terror in the post-9/11 era. Due to the collapse of a clear U.S. public interest, being or becoming a moral American is transformed from a public matter into a private one. However, through the film *Behind Enemy Lines* a conversion of what is the U.S.' private interest is also in the U.S.' private interest is made possible. It shows that in order to become a moral American one must undergo the same moral conversion that the protagonist Burnett does, from a selfish son to a selfless soldier. This trend has continued in the Transnational trend. However, starting in 2004 the narrative was moved out of the U.S. military zone and into a more public sphere of civilian struggle, but still dealing with the global interest/responsibility-issues that the war films in the immediate post-9/11 films embraced. These films are also instructive on multilateralism and what it takes for it to succeed, the Transnational trend follows these instructional tones by focusing on the global

interconnectedness and how every local conflict immediately becomes, or ought to become, a global concern.⁸⁵

The crucial question in the film *Black Hawk Down* is, “What does it take to make a (moral) difference?”⁸⁶ The film explores four different answers to this question. The first answer is simply good intentions, however this soon becomes apparent that is not enough alone. The second suggestion is that a moral purpose can be justified through humanitarianism, however as this justification is accused of being white, Western and stereotypically U.S. the film searches for a third answer. Mocking its critics, which among them are multinational institutions such as the UN, the film proves them wrong by using images that speak for themselves, and thus providing a third answer to the question: to use U.S. military superiority in the area to secure the humanitarian aid agenda it supports. In other words the film suggests that: “Military superiority can make a (moral) difference when it is used for a moral purpose (prevention of genocide).”⁸⁷ As things do not go according to plan in this film, reflecting the tragic events of Mogadishu in 1993 where a number of US soldiers were killed, the film sends out signals that military superiority is not necessarily the moral justification of making a difference and thus provides a fourth answer: by becoming a reluctant hero. Everyman, the protagonist, explains that one becomes this by not fighting for the Somalis but by fighting for the man next to you. The evolvement from selfish to selfless and from specific to universal which is evident in the film *Behind Enemy Lines* changes into Everyman in *Black Hawk Down* whose moral movement from universal to specific and from caring about every man to caring about the men who care for you, are both key issues raised in the Transnational trend. These moral dilemmas emerged from the moral discourse appeared in the post-9/11 period. No matter where the films within the Transnational trend place themselves in this moral identification process, which can vary, the influence from post-9/11 discourse is evident.

Another element present in the Transnational trend is what Weber refers to as the fifth way of making a (moral) difference in the world: by rescuing a willing and understanding object. According to Weber the Bush administration found that object in the Afghan film *Kandahar*. The film, which never portrays a kind of Hollywood dream world, symbolizes many different things that suited this fifth moral justification. Most importantly it represents the Afghan women’s fading hope and thus

for the Bush administration it represented a non-Western vision of Afghanistan as a country in need of humanitarian assistance. The film was shown in art houses two months prior to 9/11, however the Bush administration latched onto the film making sure Americans heard about it and saw it in November 2001, as it was perfectly suited to explain Americans what everyone was wondering; Why do they hate us?⁸⁸ Many of the films in the Transnational trend uphold this search for moral justification, both for humanitarian intervention and for a corporate presence leading to developed societies. Continuing the post-9/11 trend of exploring a moral American *we* in the official story of the war on terror, a American *we* which is the morally enlightened humanitarian, the Transnational trend have evolved into exploring a global *we*. A Global *we* in terms of the challenges that globalization provides the world society with, not only within the military sphere, but also in the private and public sphere. It explores the moral identity of a global *we*. The US moral grammar of war, according to Weber, consists of enlightened US do-gooders who "...fight morally unenlightened evil does not for our own self-interest but for the good of all humanity."⁸⁹ The aspects of humanitarianism and enlightenment are taken further in the Transnational trend, but rather than the focus being from within the US moral and out, the focus is from the outside, sometimes looking at the US, but mostly keeping it at a global level. One can argue that these films have a periphery culture point of view looking towards the core culture, or simply exploring the drama that occurs when the two meet. Weber suggests that it is not possible in practice to live up to the ideals of enlightened humanitarianism when our own moral mission for ourselves is defined by us. The U.S. must rather than abandoning humanitarianism as an ideal make sure that they respect those they claim to help.⁹⁰ The Transnational trend seem to be a trend in Hollywood where this point exactly is being explored. Weber contends that the US would be "...well advised not to let our moral eclipse the morality of those we wish to help. For if we make this moral mistake, we risk plunging into moral darkness."⁹¹ Some filmmakers in Hollywood seem to have taken the warnings of Weber seriously and the films in the Transnational trend are attempting to explore different perspectives in order to make its audience better equipped to understand and respect those we (Americans/Western world) are trying to help. Another side of the Transnational trend is that it also provides an outside eye of America(ns) and the Western world which gives room to reflect over self-perception and attitudes that we

project onto the rest of the world. As the American official tale of who Americans really are, the undisputed good guys fighting the undisputed bad guys (the Fascists and Nazis), told through their WWII past are communicating poorly with the reality we are facing in the post-9/11 era, there was a vacant space for the Transnational trend to fill.⁹² As the world has become more complex and the picture of what represents good and evil is more obscured than ever, films such as those provided in the immediate post-9/11 era more accurately mirrored this. However, the focus on the American moral justification of interventions and the search for answers to the American moral identity had to evolve. In 2004 *Hotel Rwanda* dived out in the deep end, but with a safety line fastened to the films that had laid out the ground work saving it from drowning. The reluctance towards multinational organizations in preventing genocide is carried on in *Hotel Rwanda* and taken further outside the military realm with the reluctance towards these same organizations in political decisions on trade in *Blood Diamond*. The themes surrounding humanitarian interventions, genocide and the challenges of multilateralism through international organizations in the post 9/11 films softened the transfer of the point of view from American to non-American. Weber asks "...if contemporary narratives of the US nation succeed only in presenting America and Americans in a sustained, positive moral light when considered through an idealized past, then how can we possibly be moral America(ns) in the post 9/11 present?"⁹³

Both the films *Minority Report* (Spielberg, 2002) and *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Moore, 2004) are critical of the Bush doctrine of Preemption. According to Weber the two films "...explore the relationship between crime and consciousness (and crime and the unconscious) individually and collectively and what that relationship(s) means for the post-9/11 US relationship between morality and power, justice and security."⁹⁴ *Minority Report* is about a man's repeated failure to see things clearly and his search for clarity in all the wrong places. The Transnational trend has chosen a different path in order to look for clarity and has chosen the transnational spaces that results from the globalization process. However, the Transnational trend has taken with it something from the previsions of who America(ns) might become from *Minority Report*. The film offers a prevision for America(ns) to choose to be "...moral America(ns) not just by refusing to commit crimes but, more important, by insisting on seeing the world, including our own world, differently."⁹⁵ This is exactly what the

Transnational trend is trying to do, provide a different set of point of views in order to clarify the vision of our own world, and those worlds of others.

Michael Moore's film *Fahrenheit 9/11* is according to Weber both hyper-individualized and utterly collectivized at the same time. Its individualism lies in the "populist spirit of Moore's work expressed through his first-person perspective"⁹⁶ and its collectivism lies in the *we/me*-focus. "We are the many middle-class (but mainly working-class) Americans who have suffered at the hands of these elite few and their neoliberal economic politics that benefit "them" but not "us"."⁹⁷ The film thus provided the Transnational trend with the focus on inequalities of neoliberalist capitalism and the uneven distribution of wealth not only in Third world countries but also in America. This is an important point to consider as it serves to support identification process viewers of films in the Transnational trend would come to have with people in the same situation elsewhere. It also contributed to a more positive sentiment towards the thought of collectivism in a rather individualist oriented society.

The films complicating the official U.S. story were not distributed to the anything like the number of screens as those supporting the official U.S. story in the immediate post-9/11 period. Many of the films in the Transnational trend have faced some of the same reluctance in distribution. Considered risk projects the distributors, holding the key to commercial success and access, have often shown reluctance to wider release of the films within this trend. Most of them were anticipated to have poor numbers, but receiving positive acclaim and various awards, these films have proved to be extremely popular both in the U.S and worldwide. This can be read as an indication that there has been a change in audience sentiments reflecting the public opinion on unilateralism and multilateralism. According to Weber the Bush administration could have made the war on terrorism more certain, both politically and morally, had he not used the language of domestication. By choosing this strategy the Bush administration accomplished two things: it rendered Americans more afraid, and second, the Bush administration's war on terror scared many outside the United States including America's traditional European allies. Weber asks whether Americans should seek moral clarity elsewhere, beyond the bounds of the nation-state, and answers herself with a clear yes!⁹⁸ The Transnational trend seems to be an answer to her prayers as she further suggests that perhaps there is no such thing as a

moral America(n) as it is an impossibility to be an identity. She suggests that the best thing to do is to pay attention to what is going on and, in so doing, avoid being so blinded by our own moral aspirations and our own aspirations that we endlessly repeat our traditional moral mistakes. The Transnational trend can from this point of view be regarded as both a response to Weber's advice and a continuation of the themes coloring the post-9/11 era.⁹⁹

According to Natoli the story of Americans' lives after 9/11 is a story of fear of a certain kind resulting from an excessively privatized way of being in the world. He proceeds to say that Americans do not have much concern for things outside, but that 9/11 was a knock from outside the American cultural solipsism.¹⁰⁰ The Transnational trend has picked up on this and when the time was ready, made ready both by postmodern cinema in general and the international themes of many of the films emerging post-9/11, the films within the trend allowed for a transnational focus to find its place within the American cultural psyche. According to Natoli you can reveal the resident reality of an epoch by going to the movies, so in order to find out what the American psyche is after 9/11 he advises us to go to the movies because: "...popular culture sets out to connect with the imaginary of the masses, not transcend it or instruct it or critique it."¹⁰¹ Even though many of the films can be said to be escapist, the films of the Transnational trend also provide a newfound seriousness as a result of the humor and irony limitation that 9/11 brought with it. The Transnational trend allows for a new point of view in the escapism, allowing for dream images to take place elsewhere, such as the Indian hope of glory we see in *Slumdog Millionaire*.

3.3 Multinational Filmmakers

Cinema has always been transnational, reaching out to a large audience and circulating freely across borders in the Western world. Hollywood has also always been utilizing international personnel, Hitchcock, Fritz Lang, Ang Lee, and John Woo, are but only a few filmmakers that have made an international impact on Hollywood. The number of multinational filmmakers in Hollywood seems to have increased; several of the films within the Transnational trend are by non-American filmmakers. It is therefore reasonable to assume that these filmmakers, both writers, actors and directors, are issuing more "world cinema"-based themed films, thus

making Hollywood more transnational in content, resulting in the Transnational trend. The duo Alejandro González Iñárritu and Guillermo Arriaga are the director and writer behind the *Death Trilogy* which includes the films *Amores Perros* (2000), *21 Grams* (2003) and *Babel* (2006) which all share the theme of death, however most importantly these Mexican filmmakers have brought their influence of Mexican culture with them in their work. Iñárritu is said to be one of the new filmmakers in Hollywood who “have broken out of the cycle of remakes Hollywood was stuck in by telling new stories about our changing world - something U.S. filmmakers once excelled at.”¹⁰² Perhaps this is proof that Hollywood needs filmmakers who can portray a different point of view. Iñárritu has said that it is important to him to tell stories from “the point of view of others, of those on the other side”, referring to peoples from Third world cultures.¹⁰³ These statements clearly support the apparent shift in points of view dominating the cultural center of the world.

Co-productions are nothing new, having existed in Hollywood since at least the 1950s. However, we are witnessing an increasing tendency of multinational co-productions these days that are not simply taking on the traditional Hollywood themes, but rather a more transnational theme. Actors from other countries than America can easily assimilate into a Hollywood film, as Americanness has increasingly become a “universal” characteristic in the world, however influences go both ways. By becoming multinational Hollywood have perhaps also become less American-focused, allowing projects fitting the Transnational trend to grow from these multinational surroundings.

On the production side the transnationality of the film industry has expanded to also include new production centers, particularly in South and East Asia. This is important in how the representations of images and Third world cultures are being reproduced. However, it is important to remember that both *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Kite Runner* were criticized for not paying its actors and film workers the rate that would be appropriate for such a production. Critics argue that there is a growing tendency to move productions to poor countries in order to keep production costs low. This is a development to be aware of and critical of.

It may be argued that Hollywood’s appropriation of Transnational cinema has had positive consequences for films termed “foreign film”. Hollywood film has traditionally been labeled the site of entertainment, and “foreign film” as sites of

edification limited to a narrow audience who frequent the “art-house circuit”. The Transnational trend is contributing to prepare a broader audience to read subtitles and become accustomed to different types of accents of the English language, as well as the periphery cultures of the Third world. However, it is useful to keep in mind that though the influence of films within the Transnational trend may stem from Third Cinema they are very much within the paradigm of Hollywood filmmaking and thus Western friendly.

In addition to becoming increasingly multinational and transnational both in production centers and film workers, the Transnational trend is not only an influence from non-American film workers. It is also a reflection of currents in society. These film will thus be a reflection of an increased awareness and attention towards global issues and challenges.

In this chapter I have highlighted some of the cinematic influences of the Transnational trend. In the following chapter I will look at how film can serve as a projector of ideology, what ideology and societal influences dominate the trend, how TNCs and the economic aspect of globalization dominates filmmaking, and finally how the positive consequence of cosmopolitanism can be abstracted from these influences.

CHAPTER 4

Film and Ideology – Globalization and Cosmopolitanism

4.0 Chapter Introduction

In the first part of this chapter I point to some theories of how film can project, and serve as an instrument for, ideology. Films in the Transnational trend can both as being part of an economic system as the transnational corporations (TNCs) that the Hollywood studios are, and through what technical and psychological means filmmakers hail us in by, be read as projectors of the predominant ideology of neoliberal capitalism evident in the globalization process.

Further I explain what I perceive to be today's prevailing ideology: the neoliberalism of globalization. I refer to Ulrich Beck's theories on what are the predominant elements of globalization that are reflected in the Transnational trend.

Following this I look at how the Transnational trend responds to TNCs economic incentive for producing films with a transnational theme. There is no doubt that the impetus for producing films in Hollywood is mainly to gain profit. The new markets emerging as a result of globalization needs to be included and this explains the economic motivation forming the Transnational trend.

A side effect of the economic incentive is an increased transnational awareness and cosmopolitanism. In the last section of this chapter I take a look at some theories explaining how the Transnational trend can be read as a positive consequence of globalization.

4.1 “Je sais bien, mais quand meme...”¹⁰⁴

Watching a film it is bound to capture you and it is difficult to create a critical distance to what you see. This is one of the main arguments for why cinema can function as support and instrument of ideology¹⁰⁵. In George Orwell's unpublished introduction to *Animal Farm* he writes that censorship in free societies are more sophisticated and thorough than in dictatorships because “Unpopular ideas can be silenced, and inconvenient facts kept in the dark, without any need for an official ban.”¹⁰⁶ Film and media in general are subject to the kind of censorship that Orwell is referring to. As the media conglomerates control both content and distributions on

most levels in most continents, they have the power to censor their products so that they cannot criticize the system within which they are created. Natoli implies that we share a powerfully constructed cultural imaginary that may stem from postmodernity. He suggests that perhaps "...postmodernity is the "cultural logic" of what created this imaginary, or maybe postmodernity is what enables us to recognize what the invisible hand of the global market has made of us."¹⁰⁷ He goes on to say that transnationalized capitalism has defined the dimensions of that imaginary, and that it is the dominating values and meanings of globalized capitalism that narrates this powerful imaginary.¹⁰⁸ The Transnational trend is no exception. The imaginary used in the trend obviously has its basis in the dominating values of globalized capitalism and it certainly contains ideological messages wrapped in transparent cinematic devices.

In order to obtain this effect there are many components. There is obviously a mix between the pure technical sides to this phenomenon such as editing, *mise-en-scène*, continuity and the relationship between the camera and the subject, and social conditions discussed in several disciplines within film studies. Mass Culture theorists' focus is on how the "...masscult is politically dangerous because it is argued that masscult trains people to defer to authority"¹⁰⁹. These critics focused on the societal and psychological aspects that make film function as support and instrument of ideology. Screen Theory made it their aim to look at cinema as form in order to better understand the social practice of the cinema through examining spectatorship and its ideological implications. Cultural studies offer theories addressing the historical processes through which the capitalist or patriarchal systems changed and developed, thus offering a less fixed explanation of how the ideological effects of film could take hold of social groups. No matter what approach chosen to explore the area of film and ideology, the issue has been of concern to most strands of film theory, indicating its importance.¹¹⁰

The industrial and economic side to Hollywood obviously plays an extremely important part both in how films are produced, distributed and marketed and within what social and economic ideological context they are made. The economic aspect of Hollywood is perhaps its main driving force, and its productions will always reflect who holds the capital. This industry embraces capitalism as its main *rason d'être*, and as a film text must be understood in the context of the culture industries within which they are produced and distributed it will necessarily project this dominant ideology.¹¹¹

The technical side of film, such as *mise-en-scène*, continuity and the notion of *suture*, contributes to the effect of film of entering the subconscious and leaving us partly unable to hold a critical distance to what we see. As was argued by Daniel Dayan that the shot/reverse shot system created the appearance of transparency in film and thus "... the ideological effect of the film was to render itself transparent, to present a particular ideological position as through it were "truth.""¹¹² The fact that the films in the Transnational trend has its basis in realism and uses symbols and images of seemingly authentic places and cultures they are easily interpreted as presenting the truth or a truthful presentation of the truth. As the West has limited knowledge of periphery cultures, and vice versa, the trend enjoys an unrestricted use of images and representations in its productions.

The most common definition of ideology is that it is a common set of thoughts generally held by the dominant group and proposed to all members within a society. Ideology is something that is in constant process and is reflected in society through values and social codes. Hollywood has reflected these changing conditions and dominant ideologies throughout film history. The effects of globalization have influenced Hollywood. It is common to assume globalization to equal Americanization, however, I think it is evident that globalization is a transnational current, and the U.S. is not immune towards global influence. In the same way that the rest of the world takes on American values and make them their own, Hollywood seem to take on transnational values and make them their own. That said the main force controlling globalization is capitalism, an ideology embraced by the U.S. for a long time. This means that the films in the Transnational trend also projects Western values onto Third world audiences in the same process as it is informing the new middlebrow of the Western world of those cultures of the Third world. It is thus not a linear, but a circular, mode of reception to these films. In other words, the Transnational trend could be argued to be a positive consequence of globalization. In order to find out we need to take a closer look at what constitutes today's prevailing ideology, but first let us look more closely at how film disguises this ideology.

4.2 Film and Ideology

Ideology in relation to film can be explained by Karl Marx's famous ideologically censoring standards:

“The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it”.¹¹³

Though Marx was not particularly referring to film it is obvious today that film as a medium, and especially Hollywood films, have an enormous influence as both a strong economic bloc and as a global mediascape. Screen theory debates film as form in an ideological sense, more than any other discipline. Mass Culture critics such as the Frankfurt School also dealt with the ideological implications of film within popular culture, or mass culture, however in a way that was less directed towards film as form. Common for them both though, are the theories of Marx and Althusser in laying an analytical framework for how film can serve as an instrument of ideology.

As a response to the capitalist society the culture industry operates within, Adorno and Horkheimer claimed that; “the basis on which technology acquires power over society is the power of those whose economic hold over society is greatest”¹¹⁴. In this sense Hollywood is controlled by those with the strongest economic positions and thus rely on banks and the electronic industries, which eventually would be the forces controlling the consumers or the film viewers. Following this theory the audience is open to manipulation from conservative and capitalistic blocs controlling society. Viewing culture as a pure result of production and capitalism may seem fragmented, however according to the Frankfurt School theorists the “...sole value of culture was to generate profit and therefore maintain the capitalist system”¹¹⁵ meaning that the culture was made into a commodity transforming folk and popular cultures into commodities mass-produced and distributed to the masses. According to Adorno and Horkheimer good cinema does not exist, to them cinema was part of the “... culture industry and therefore its aesthetics have one ideological purpose – to reproduce the spectator as consumer.”¹¹⁶ Taking the corporate colonization we are witnessing today the Frankfurt School was perhaps quite right in their warnings against the massive influence of popular culture and the culture industries. Films are increasingly replacing literature as the main medium of storytelling. Following the argument that films are transforming folk and popular cultures into mass-produced

commodities with the sole ideological purpose of reproducing the spectator as consumer, it could be argued that the Transnational trend's way of portraying periphery cultures are forming third cultures that are fitted to new markets and consumers both in the core and periphery cultures. Films produced in Hollywood are, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, basically all the same, based on a successful formula. The differences between the films, which in DNA were the same, lie in how they are marketed towards the consumers. As the Frankfurt critics argued: "the marketing process was concerned with "classifying, organizing and labeling consumers" so that they would be controlled."¹¹⁷ This strategy gives the audience a sense of choosing individually, however this choice is according to these critics illusory. Genre film and the star-system supported this strategy and provided Hollywood studios with the labels needed in order to operate with these marketing strategies. Given that the film industry, which Adorno refers to as the most central sector of the culture industry, was growing in strength and gaining a larger market over the years from 1930 and well into the 1950s, and at the same time embracing capitalism as ideology and projecting this not only onto America, but also the rest of its allies within the Western world, the cultural hegemony and influence Hollywood has enjoyed is enormous. With the unlimited access to the European market through the Marshall Aid, American brands and products, including Hollywood films, could establish themselves without much competition. As a counterpart to the communism in Soviet the U.S. was aggressive in gaining market control as well as "control of the mind", Adorno was probably right in suggesting that the "power of the culture industry is such that conformity has replaced consciousness."¹¹⁸ Without any competing ideologies, as was the case during the Cold War, the ideology of neoliberal capitalism is not really being contested in any other way than by transnational terrorist networks that defy the Western civilization on all levels. This means that the continued unrestricted flow of images is important as a vehicle for spreading ideological messages in agreement with the predominant ideologies of globalization.

The technical side of Hollywood films also function as tools for controlling thoughts and imposing values. Because of its transparency and ability to create a sense of reality it is difficult for the audience to distinguish between film and real life. This (mis)conception of reality is the basis for the idea of the "hypodermic syringe" model.¹¹⁹ This media effects' model suggests that the audience is passively receiving

the injection of a negative message. The model helps explain why people are unable to tell the difference between real life and fiction, something that has often surged in connection with school killings and killings directly connected to films. One example is number of murders inspired by the Oliver Stone film *Natural Born Killers* (1994), which actually reach as high as 13 incidents. In a sense the idea that the better the technology is equipped to create a sense of reality the more cinema and the culture industry can dominate the audience as Adorno and Horkheimer believed, does not seem so far fetched. In the Transnational trend films have its basis in realism. The usage of TV, radio and other media clippings contribute to enhance this sense of reality. In filmmaking now there are hardly any stories that are just made up, a large number are based on a story from a newspaper article, real events in trade, war, or work places. The documentary also reached a new status with Michael Moore's documentaries. Media's ability to document events real time, i.e. the planes crashing into the Twin Towers or documentation of genocide etc. has changed both warfare and the role of the media. This in time has also changed how films are made. The demand for authenticity is greater today as we have access to more information and flow of images. This also makes it harder for audiences to distinguish between what is reality and what is fiction. When a film can look just as real, or just as unreal, as a news-coverage, how can anyone really tell who has presented the most truthful story?

The "Hypodermic Syringe" model suggests that because productions are to a large degree standardized, so are the reactions of the audience, something that is very similar to what Dwight MacDonald referred to as a "Built-In Reaction". MacDonald based much of his work on the theories of Adorno and Horkheimer, and suggested that this "built-in-reaction" included "the spectator's reactions in the work itself instead of forcing him to make his own responses"¹²⁰. Following MacDonald's argument that the industrialization and commoditization of culture created a homogeneous and standardized masscult, the parallel to regarding the medium of film, as an instrument of ideology is clear. Especially today where we do not really have any opposing global ideologies, we are even more vulnerable such mass manipulation.

Screen Theory also concerned itself with ideological effects of film and passive spectatorship. It aimed to provide a discussion of the formal features of film, in other words not looking into one specific aspect of cinema but rather cinema as form in

itself. This enabled Screen theory to be global in its theories. Today, when dominant ideologies are less polar than they were prior to 1990, Screen theory may be more valid today than ever. The aim of screen theory was:

“... First, to work towards a greater understanding of the relationship between the viewer and film; second, to assess the ideological implications of this process; and third, to do so not so much in the interest of scientific accuracy or high scholarly endeavor but rather with the political aim to develop “a new social practice of the cinema”...¹²¹

According to Mark Jancovich there are two claims in this discourse, one is that ideology is the way people perceive themselves to be coherent individuals, and that cinema is implicated in the maintenance of ideology and needs to be countered. Screen theory drew on three main influences, Saussurian linguistics in order to explain the narrative of film, which was considered to be the main features of most cinematic forms, with its structure of beginning, middle, and an end indicating realism, but according to Screen theorists is a constructed world of chosen truths, which according to Colin McCabe has ideological implications in the sense that by providing a privileged point of view. According to McCabe this presentation of a supposed truth, emphasized technically by the chosen camera angles, discourages the audience to form an independent opinion. These ideas brought the screen theorists on to Althusser's ideas of interpellation, in other words how film was hailing in its viewers, by connecting them to the subject-centered organization of the narratives in film. According to Althusser subjects are addressed by society. One takes up positions in society in which we are defined by the social structure much in the same sense as subject is a function of language in Saussurian linguistics. According to this the consequential process of viewing film is ideological as it privileges one point of view over others and so makes this point of view seem transparent or obvious – it is presented as the truth, rather than a particular point of view. The narrative structure of classic realist text in popular film indicates that there is nothing wrong with existing social structures that cannot be dealt with by individual action. Thus there is no reason to change the ways in which we live our lives as a society. Cinema is always connected to the conservative and the maintenance of capitalism thus popular film is an inherently ideological system. According to Screen theorists film will continue to repeat the same process of containment and repression that reproduce the dominant

ideology. I believe that Screen theory has perhaps more value with its generalizations today because of globalization and the world in effect becoming smaller and more condensed. It might be argued that the ideas based on universal generalization are in fact form a more valid discourse today than when Screen theorists presented their work in the 1970s. The market for Hollywood cinema is even more far reaching today than before and capitalism as ideology is more integrated on a global level. The theories Screen theorists produced are thus applicable to view the current trends in Hollywood today in relations to the dominant ideology.¹²²

The system of both intercutting between shots and the editing system is argued to have an effect of transparency, making ideology in film less obvious and thus making the viewer unable to oppose. Pierre Oudart argued that intercutting was necessary in order for the viewer's sense of mastery and coherence. According to Oudart it is the shot/reverse shot system that provides the solution of the problem of incompleteness that would have occurred without it, and so would give the audience a less transparent truth. Daniel Dayan argues that the shot/reverse shot system helps the image become an integrated part of the film and thus the point of view of a narrative character is not presented as a product of ideology but as part of the fictional world of film. Dayan claims that this system was a device in which the text disguised its own operations and so created the appearance of transparency. The editing system has been argued to have the same function. By editing shots, sounds, and visuals filmmakers can create the sense of time and space that creates and intensifies a sense of reality. Christian Metz considered cinema to be a record of that which was absent, and within the psychic processes of the subject's production and reproduction there were three main processes: identification, voyeurism, and fetishism. He further argues that the spectator does not identify with the characters of the narrative, but places him or herself outside the action and identifies with the position of the spectator, which involves the illusion of and mastery and coherence.¹²³ This means that the spectator is aware that what they are watching is absent, but they choose to believe it is present – “Je sais bien, mais quand meme...”¹²⁴ By keeping with the formal paradigm of Hollywood the Transnational trend does not risk falling outside the norm of identification and suture despite presenting non-American protagonists and non-American places of action. By keeping the themes of the films universal, i.e. struggle for justice, love, freedom (all values that are in keeping with American values) and by

keeping the theme on a transnational rather than on a national level, the films include audiences of a wide specter.

According to Joseph Natoli “everything is narrated in reference to the master voice of the market, which outshouts and overwhelms every other voice.”¹²⁵ The Transnational trend in Hollywood is also a product of a dominant ideology and the master voice of the market. Neoliberalism embracing the corporate power in the free global market is the dominant ideology provided for by the processes of Globalization. According to Ulrich Beck, through globalism, the world market:

“...eliminates or supplants political action – that is, the ideology of the rule by the world market, the ideology of neoliberalism. It proceeds monocausally and economistically, reducing the multidimensionality of globalization to a single economic dimension that is itself conceived in a linear fashion. If it mentions at all the other dimensions of globalization – ecology, culture, politics, civil society – it does so only by placing them under a sway of the world-market system.”¹²⁶

This ideology is also the controlling force of Hollywood with its Transnational Corporate (TNC) control. The Transnational trend is thus an ideological consequence of globalization and consequently neoliberalism, which knows no boundaries of expanding markets. According to Natoli popular film has to present itself within a naïve realist mode of presentation in order to avoid failure and to allow the viewer to have sense of reassurance and control of his or her own grasp of reality. He also argues that there has to be a threat to everything naïve realism has worked to create in order to create a moment that seizes the viewer. Popular films then tend to draw back and away to recover what it has disclosed and in the end we are left with the feeling of regaining control, and the feeling that “our picture of the world is indeed not a picture but the world itself.”¹²⁷ Hollywood has taken in the world perhaps that proves that globalization is not a one-way street? Perhaps it shows that the corporate cynicism is willing to sacrifice the American mythmaking factory in order to expand its markets? No matter what the backcloth may be, the ideological effect of globalization has influenced the trend in many respects. According to Robert Ray “Ideology is not a thing that dictates such formations as cinema, but rather a set of social relationships fought out in different arenas of which film is among the most prominent.”¹²⁸ There

is no doubt that Hollywood as an industry is dependent on the neoliberal capitalism ideology of the globalization process today and therefore will project messages supporting it. However, this is not the same as the effects of this being purely negative. If the Transnational trend is a consequence of this globalization process, then is that not a positive side effect of the economic dimensions that overrules every other dimension in the globalization process? Can these films encourage a cosmopolitanism that would arguably be a positive influence within the globalization process and its dominant systems? In the next part of this chapter we will explore these possibility.

4.3 The Prevailing Ideology of Today

“My dear Rick, when will you realize that in this world today, isolationism is no longer a practical policy”¹²⁹

Beck argues that Globalism is the ideology of neoliberalism.¹³⁰ All the dimensions of globalization; ecology, culture, politics, and civil society, is according to this theory reduced to one single entity: the economy of the world-market system. By *Globality* Beck refers to the fact that closed spaces have become illusory, thus “world society” then “... denotes the totality of social relationships which are *not* integrated into or determined (or determinable) by national-state politics.”¹³¹ Further, *Globalization*, according to Beck, denotes the processes through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks. This type of new globality is irreversible because the dimensions of it are functioning independently and can thus not be reduced or collapsed into one another.¹³² Beck gives eight reasons for why the *new globality* is irreversible:

1. The geographical expansion and even greater density of international trade, as well as the global networking of finance markets and the growing power of transnational corporations
2. The ongoing revolution of information and communications technology
3. The universal demands for human rights – the (lip service paid to the) principle of democracy
4. The stream of images from the global culture industries
5. The emergence of a postnational, polycentric world politics, in which transnational actors (corporations, non-governmental organizations, United Nations) are growing in power and number alongside governments
6. The question of world poverty
7. The issue of global environmental destruction
8. Transcultural conflicts in one and the same place

Beck claims that this second modernity contains challenges that are so different from the first modernity that all stock answers to the first are inapplicable to the second, and thus politics need to be reinvented. In the same way Hollywood has needed to reinvent itself as a response to these changes. A transnational focus in its recent productions can be regarded as both a financial investment in new markets and as part of a larger cultural globalization process, as well as a being a reflection of the current ideology and currents of society. The interconnectedness through the numerous transnational actors, institutions and agreements, the self-perception in this transnationality, global ecological dangers are but a few important elements that calls for different responses to global challenges of the second modernity. As there is no world state – i.e. no hegemonic power or international regime – a globally disorganized capitalism is continually spreading out, according to Beck.¹³³ Hollywood has a history of responding to the U.S.’ political, social and economic dilemmas. The Transnational trend that emerged in the post-9/11 period thus emerged as a natural consequence of these currents in society, converting the dilemmas of globality into personal melodramas that melts with the formal and thematic paradigm of Hollywood.

A *Globalization Process* is, according to Beck, taking place within globalization. Its success and limitations may be posed in relations to three parameters:

- a. extension in space
- b. stability over time
- c. social density of the transnational networks, relationships and image-flows

Beck suggests that the peculiarity of this globalization process lies in “the empirically ascertainable scale, density and stability of regional-global relationship networks and their self-definition through the mass media, as well as of social spaces and of image-flows at a cultural, political, economic and military level.”¹³⁴ He further suggests that this is a new phenomenon, due to the interconnectedness in dense networks and across national frontiers, the self-perception stems from this transnationality, particularly in the mass media, consumption and tourism, and it is has led to a new kind of perception of Others in one’s own culture. Global culture

industries thus circulate in on a new level, and the Transnational trend in Hollywood is a clear example of how.¹³⁵

According to Ulrich Beck globalization is replacing politics, and the ideology of neo-liberalism is the ideology by rule in the world market. He also professes that the interconnectedness in the globalization process makes the process irreversible. Accordingly, everything that happens in the world will have consequences for everyone, nothing is any longer local, no financial, ecological crisis or armed conflict is a matter of local concern; it is glocal. In this process transnational social links will be created, and spaces, revaluation of local cultures, and a promotion of third cultures made up from a little bit of everything, will emerge.¹³⁶ This process can explain why a Transnational trend has emerged in Hollywood. It also explains the dominant ideology some films in Hollywood project. According to Carl Boggs nothing has undermined the public sector or eviscerated political discourse more than the process of corporate colonization.¹³⁷ The reduction of the multidimensionality of globalization to one economic dimension may provide an explanation as to why the transnational theme, and apparent theme of interconnectedness, is closely linked to global trade, consumerism and tourism in many of the films within the Transnational trend in Hollywood. On the business side of filmmaking globalization explains how Hollywood studios and its producers, like any other transnational conglomerate, are aware of growing markets, and are quite deliberate in their focus on films with a transnational content telling the stories of people from the periphery culture in order to communicate with these new emerging markets of economic importance.

Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard claim that postmodern cinema produced in the age of “*Corporate Colonization*” in Hollywood is depoliticized and impotent of embracing anything resembling collective action or social change.¹³⁸ However, a new sense of political awareness has become the norm in the Transnational trend and reflects a growing transnational awareness of the U.S.’ importance to the rest of the world. In *Hotel Rwanda* the local conflict is made glocal through the critique of the lack of involvement of the UN and other IOs. In *Blood Diamond* the shift is very clear in the protagonist’s choice of sacrificing himself for the greater good, something that favors collective action and disregards the individualistic thinking and action of male protagonists in Hollywood mainstream film that dominated postmodern cinema up until 2001. This shift in mainstream Hollywood productions may be an indicator of

the ideological effect of globalization onto cinema, but also a response to how we are dealing with the challenges presented to us both socially and politically by the globalization process. Hollywood has previously proved to be forward thinking when it comes to political and social issues. The 9/11 Group the Pentagon formed after the 9/11 attacks was composed of Hollywood filmmakers and was asked to brainstorm future terrorist scenarios in order to advise the Pentagon on the matter. This exemplifies the power and the ability Hollywood filmmakers have to predict future scenarios on many levels with basis in currents of society and the prevailing ideology.

4.4 The Transnational Trend's Corporate Response

Many are convinced that globalization is the equivalent of destruction of national identity, John Tomlinson however contends that globalization is the most significant force in creating and proliferating cultural identity.¹³⁹ However, according to John B. Thompson nearly all of the large communication conglomerates are based in North America, Western Europe, Australia or Japan. Very few are based in Third world countries, although these cultures provide important markets for their goods and services. Hence, the development of communication conglomerates has led to the formation of large concentrations of economic and symbolic power. These are privately controlled and unevenly distributed, and can deploy massive resource to extensive, privately controlled networks of communication through which information and symbolic content flow.¹⁴⁰ The Transnational trend in Hollywood can from a cynical point of view be seen as a pure economic impetus. Producers and distributors seek to exploit the lucrative markets created by satellite and cable channels and by videocassette rentals and sales.¹⁴¹ In order to communicate with a global market it is necessary to have a firm grasp of the local at the same time. Without local connections it is challenging to market a product, thus globally marketable products must be creamed off local cultures. The Transnational trend attempts to tighten this local hold in order to expand Hollywood's markets.¹⁴² According to Christopher Dixon, media analyst for the investment firm Paine Webber, the entertainment industry is now going through the same process as the oil and mobile industry; global oligopoly. "The global media market has come to be dominated by the same eight corporations, or TNCs, that rule US media: General Electric, AT&T/Liberty Media, Disney, Time Warner, Sony News Corporation,

Viacom and Seagram, plus Bertelsmann, the Germany-based conglomerate.”¹⁴³ In other words the entertainment industry is a highly concentrated industry on a global level. Most dominant media companies manage to exploit the synergies among the companies they own by controlling the content and distribution of their products. Many Hollywood studios are owned by one of the large conglomerates, which also control cable channels and TV networks that air the movies they make. Most large studios also have divisions that produce smaller projects intended for a smaller market. These divisions, such as Fox Searchlight and Miramax, specialize in marketing strategies towards narrow markets. Warner Independent Pictures, Warner Bros. Pictures’ specialty division, bought the rights for distribution of the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, however, when the division was closed down and the larger company found itself without a marketing division on what they considered to be a small film. Fox Searchlight cut a deal with Warner Bros and used their skills to promote the film, winning eight Oscars in the process. Despite the enormous success of this film that was perceived to be a small film, due to the current financial climate, many of the larger studios tend to focus on the films that sell themselves. The immediate future, therefore, does not hold many promises for films such as *Babel* and other accented films, however it seems the theme of globalization and transnationality will continue, as evident in the film *The International*.

According to McChesney the major media companies have moved aggressively to become global players in order to capitalize on the potential growth abroad since the US market is well developed and only permits incremental expansion. As Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone has put it, “Companies are focusing on those markets promising the best return, which means overseas.” Frank Biondi, former chairman of Seagram’s Universal Studios, asserts that “99 percent of the success of these companies long-term is going to be successful execution offshore.”¹⁴⁴ Following these arguments, Hollywood cannot afford to return to an isolationist mode, thus the Transnational trend will most likely continue to grow, one way or the other. “The global commercial-media system is radical in that it will respect no tradition or custom, on balance, if it stands in the way of profits. But ultimately it is politically conservative, because the media giants are significantly beneficiaries of the current social structure around the world, and any upheaval in property of social relations – particularly to the extent that it reduces power of business – is not in their interest.”¹⁴⁵

According to this the Transnational trend is obviously a trend that is profitable and targeting broad markets. It is not critically dangerous to the very system prevailing within globalization. No matter how willing any filmmaker in Hollywood is to promote some kind of critical comment on globalization or neoliberalism, he or she operates within a system that prevents it from being done. In other words, the Transnational trend is not an attempt to change the world system, but as a side effect it creates a more sympathetic and cosmopolitan world society rather than the one-way street projection of Western values Hollywood has provided its audience with so far. Hollywood is not primarily a provider of American culture as the global media system is a system that advances corporate and commercial values and denigrates or ignores that which cannot be incorporated into its mission. In this sense the Transnational trend has moved beyond national values and extended to transnational spaces, exploring values therein, as a consequence of corporate and commercial needs. According to *Variety* editor, Peter Bart, popular taste is to become more uniform and the world's film-going audience more homogenous.¹⁴⁶ Creating a sort of third culture, as the McDonalds version of Afghanistan we witnessed in *Kite Runner* (Forster, 2007) or the slum chic of *Slumdog Millionaire*, the homogenization of popular taste on a more global level is on its way. Robert McChesney states that the global media corporations globalize their productions when audiences seem to prefer locally made fare, this has been most evident in the music business. However, the Transnational trend seems to have picked up on this preference too. *Slumdog Millionaire* is a clear example of such an attempt. To propose to the Indian market as well as the American with its Bollywood meets *Forrest Gump* this feel-good film was a stroke of genius in any marketing executive's book. As McChesney points out "...media conglomerates exist simply to make money by selling light escapist entertainment."¹⁴⁷, he could easily have spoken of many of the films in the Transnational trend. No matter how much we could wish the film industry of Hollywood to have a higher mission of making us all into cosmopolitans critical of the perils of globalization, it as McChesney concludes: "The global media system is fundamentally non-competitive in the any meaningful economic sense of the term."¹⁴⁸ According to Pollard and Boggs "...cinema occupies a space where global forces of industrialism, consumerism, technology, and popular culture merge into a hegemonically powerful *ensemble*."¹⁴⁹ The economic incentive that lies behind the films in the Transnational

trend do not take away from them the incentive to serve a higher purpose of being cosmopolitan, despite it being a side effect rather than the main purpose. The Transnational trend itself is an indicator of Hollywood's reinvention of itself as an industry that embraces its audience, and its markets, on a global level. The transnational flow of capital also means that there is a transnational flow of culture. Arjun Appadurai's conception of "mediascape"¹⁵⁰ explains how divergent people and cultures are linked. At the same time it also explains how diverse cultures are able to assimilate with local and regional ideas, images and ideologies.¹⁵¹ In other words Hollywood as a global industry needs to communicate with the global market, the global reach of Hollywood produce means that there is space beyond the U.S. in which it needs to communicate with. The inclusion of the periphery cultures, and thus new voices and points of view, is not made solely on a cosmopolitan basis, but from an economic agenda. Nevertheless, the trend pushes some idealistic incentives such as cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism to the fore.

4.5 Positive Consequence of Globalization?

John Tomlinson says that globalization proliferates rather than destroys identities. He argues that globalization in reality is the globalization of modernity, and that modernity is the harbinger of identity. He further argues that: "The implication of understanding identity as a specifically modern cultural imagination is sufficient to undermine the simple idea that globalization destroys identity."¹⁵² Interpreting Tomlinson's argument the kind of identity that the Transnational trend provides us with, an assumed correct portrayal of a periphery culture whether it is in Africa, Morocco or Mexico, is not a destruction of identity because identity is a figment of imagination. Some would probably argue that this is a simplification of how Hollywood has chosen to appropriate bits and pieces of the cultures they portray in order to make it fit the Hollywood paradigm. Nonetheless, the Transnational trend portrays perhaps the very nerve of globalization, the very nerve of transnationality in creating the sort of "third culture" that Beck refers to. This indicates how Hollywood is taking in, willingly or not, the currents of globalization and turns the periphery culture into a global commodity. Thus, as Tomlinson puts it: "And in so far as globalization distributes the institutional features of modernity across all cultures, globalization produces "identity" where none existed – where before there were

perhaps more particular, more inchoate, less socially policed belongings.”¹⁵³ This is, according to Tomlinson, the most significant cultural impact of globalization. He admits that in a narrow sense it can be seen as “cultural imperialism”, but also as part of the cultural package that is global modernity. This speaks for the Transnational trend not being an attempt to Americanize the world, but an attempt to meet halfway in the authentic manner of Hollywood.

Anthony D. Smith finds it difficult to eye an opening for cultural cosmopolitanism, however, he keeps the door open to possibilities of “families of culture”. He suggests that some cultures-areas may serve as model in the more long-term future for broader inter-continental versions. The Transnational trend in Hollywood can be argued to serve as such a model, indicating that we are moving away from national cultures, and national cinema, towards ethno-national cultures as a consequence, and despite, of corporate power and globalization. National identities are not a constant and will thus be influence by the symbolic materials it is exposed to. Thompson’s belief that locales become sites where globalized media products are received, interpreted and incorporated into daily lives of individuals as symbolic materials circulate on an ever-greater scale becomes evident through such films as provided by the Transnational trend in Hollywood. The appropriation of symbolic materials enables individuals to gain some conception of ways of life and life conditions which differ significantly from their own. They are able to gain some conceptions of regions of the world, which are far removed from their own locales.¹⁵⁴ When President Bush needed to justify his actions of liberating both Afghan women from the Taliban and Iraqis from Saddam Hussein, he deliberately promoted the film *Kandahar* and used it to promote his own agenda. By giving the Americans a glance into what Afghan people, and particularly women, had to endure under the Taliban regime, Bush managed to gain support for his mission against the “axis of evil”. Isolationism has colored American film industry for many years, however in the post-9/11 period, Hollywood seems to have gradually opened up towards a more cosmopolitan and self-reflective attitude. Symbolic distancing has normally been a one-way street. People elsewhere have been fed American values and traditions for years, but with the Transnational trend Americans and people from the core culture of the West are experiencing a glimpse of the periphery culture, though linked to their

own culture through how the world's apparent interconnectedness, and thus recognizable all the same.

One may ask whether there is anything pointing in the direction of the world becoming more “cosmopolitan”; that is, more broadly sympathetic to international issues and concerns, and less preoccupied with the claim that national identity must always trump other more global considerations. According to Pippa Norris there is a generational divide, younger generations and the baby boomers tend to identify more with a global identity than those born prior to or immediately after the Second World War. As Hollywood has a strong tendency to focus on a young audience this type of identification is arguably reflected in the Transnational trend. When reading globalization as something that can have positive effects one is often accused of being rather naïve. However, as pointed out by many theorists within globalization theory, the process of globalization calls for rethinking of our established institutions. Increased corporate power has overtaken the role of political institutions, and countries could basically be run as a company rather than on a democratic basis as a consequence of this corporate colonization. The Transnational trend in Hollywood reflects exactly what David Held argues to draw nation-states together; complex processes of interdependence on problems such as AIDS, migration, human rights, crime, trade, environmental pollution, and new challenges to peace, security, and economic prosperity that spill over national boundaries.¹⁵⁵ As the growing dependency on global concern over such issues is receiving attention from the culture industry's hegemon Hollywood, it is an indication that these responsibilities are taken seriously, and the development of a cosmopolitan awareness is considered an investment, if not for humanitarian purposes, but nonetheless that is the effect of it. According to Pippa Norris “...the most recent wave of globalization in communications may have encouraged a resurgence of cosmopolitanism to spread beyond the elite circles to the mass public.”¹⁵⁶ She further concludes that the younger generations are most cosmopolitan in their orientation due to education, mobility, and urbanization among the most important factors. As globalization is about growing mobility across frontiers, *Slumdog Millionaire* can be said to reflect such an upwards mobility in a social structure made possible by the globalization process taking place in India.¹⁵⁷ Due to technology and the mobility globalization has provided us with there is obviously room for a Transnational trend even in Hollywood and the effects

of it is increased cosmopolitanism. Though *Slumdog Millionaire* portrays an upbeat version of the consequences of globalization, providing Jamal, the slumdog, with an opportunity of prosperity, there are other films that focus more on the complexity and downsides to globalization. It reflects the currents of globalization and it opens up for voices and images the middlebrow of the West is not accustomed to. Hopefully this will turn the masses into cosmopolitans in the broad sense of the word and increase awareness of the global challenges we are facing. However, the films within this trend are never actually criticizing the very nerve of globalization; it never questions it as a system. The films highlight problematic issues and areas arising in the globalization process, but they never dig very deep into the possibilities of alternatives to neoliberal capitalism and corporate control. Being fed by this very system this is a freedom that Hollywood does not enjoy. The question is; does any filmmaking institution, regardless of location, really have this freedom? More or less all distribution, national and international, are controlled by the TNCs that control film distribution worldwide. A production company hoping to have some financial success with its film needs to keep with the frameworks of the system keeping them economical viable. In conclusion, therefore, the films in the Transnational trend are very much reflecting currents of globalization and is projecting its ideology. Though the main incentive for producing films fitting with the Transnational trend may be economic, the side effect of it is an increased transnational awareness and an increased cosmopolitanism amongst viewers. All in all the trend does not contest or critique the ideology of globalism, rather it aids its position on a global level by focusing on the opportunities available within globalism, but the side effects of it is indeed a positive consequence of globalization.

In the next chapter I will discuss three of the films within the Transnational trend in Hollywood. The three films are Edward Zwick's film *Blood Diamond* from 2006, Alejandro González Iñárritu's film *Babel* from 2006, and Danny Boyle's film *Slumdog Millionaire* from 2008. In my presentation of these three case studies, I will relate the films to first, the premises I have laid out for the Transnational trend, second, the ideological and filmic influences the trend reflects and has emerged from.

Chapter 5

Case Studies

5.0 Chapter Introduction

In this section I will present a case study of three films within the Transnational trend in order to exemplify what the genre consists of, I will focus on the elements of transnationality, globalization, accented cinema, displaced cinema, and the meeting between the core and periphery cultures. There are many elements in these films that are not relevant to the point I am highlighting and will therefore not be dealt with in these cases. I will not take into consideration whether or not these films are portraying Third world cultures in a realistic or authentic way or not. There is no doubt that Hollywood's portrayal of periphery cultures are formed in order to communicate with both a Western and non-Western audience within the frameworks of popular culture. These films are more often than not authentic to one culture but rather construct a kind of hyper-real third culture. When watching the film *Kite Runner* you easily get the feeling of being presented with the McDonalds' version of Afghanistan. The experience feels good at first, but after consuming it, it suddenly just sits like a lump of a bad tasting brick in your tummy, not unlike a Big Mac. It is not relevant to the discussion whether Hollywood films are functioning as a tool in the Americanization process of the Third world, I have therefore not taken into the case studies the question of what effect the films in the Transnational trend would have on either the a Western audience, nor non-Western audiences. The case studies are thus not full analyses of the films in a critical perspective; they are mere case studies that exemplify what films constitute the Transnational trend. I will show how these films fit into the criteria for the trend that I laid out in previous chapters. Each case starts with a synopsis, then an analysis of the films with those criteria in mind. All of the three films, as all of the films within the Transnational trend, are within the keeping of the formal and thematic paradigm of Hollywood. This paradigm has been explained in greater detail in chapter 1 and will therefore not be dealt with in great analytical detail in these case studies. From all the films in the trend I have chosen those that in my opinion represent the trend in the purest form. If I had chosen from the earlier films there would have been several criteria that would not have been met, such as usage of

non-American protagonists. The further we dive into the trend's development line the more these films are about transnational issues without being a war film as such. The American presences in these films become less and less noticeable as the trend develops. The three films I have chosen to present are: *Blood Diamond* (Zwick 06/07), *Babel* (Iñárritu, 06), and *Slumdog Millionaire* (Boyle, 08/09). They have big Hollywood distributing companies behind them and received good reviews and large numbers at the box office. Thematically they deal with ethical choices and social struggle and share glocality in content, comment on political and social issues, and comment on the world's relation to their specific country. However, they differ greatly in that *Blood Diamond* and *Babel* depend on the usage of a huge star in their leading characters (DiCaprio, Pitt, Blanchett), and thus was considered "safer" projects economically and marketing vice. The two films are also to a larger degree what you could call purely Hollywood financed productions. *Slumdog Millionaire* is in general not a Hollywood production, though distributed by Fox Searchlight it was mainly financed by French and British money, and only more or less appropriated by Hollywood after becoming such a huge success. The film has no internationally known stars in the leading roles and the characters are all Indian (part from some scenes with different tourists). Their similarities and differences is what make them interesting and particularly useful in order to explain the development of the transnational genre in Hollywood.

5.1 Blood Diamond (Zwick, 2006)

"Motion pictures seldom include scenes showing the selection or purchase of an engagement ring to a girl. It would be our plan to contact scenario writers and directors and arrange for such scenes."

A memo sent to Harry Oppenheimer, whose family founded the De Beers diamond cartel, in 1938.¹⁵⁸

Blood Diamond was directed and co-produced by Edward Zwick and written by Charles Leavitt. The film stars two high profile actors; Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Connelly, the other actors are a blend of lesser-known European and African actors. The film was received well by both the audience and critics. It was nominated to a number of awards, including 5 Oscars, among them best actor and supporting role, but

they won non. Djimon Hounsou won 3 different awards for best supporting role. The film was financially backed and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures.¹⁵⁹

5.1.1 Synopsis

Blood Diamond is a film about Conflict Diamonds set in Sierra Leone during the civil war of the 1997-1998. The film's first scene establishes a loving father, Solomon (Djimon Hounsou), caring for his wife and three children. This family is then violently torn apart as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels slaughter down the village. Solomon manages to secure his family, but is captured himself. The villagers are threatened by the rebels not to vote in upcoming elections by amputating their hands; those who are not amputated are sent to dig for diamonds. All the prisoners are treated harshly, we see one prisoner putting a diamond in his mouth, and he is instantly shot. Solomon too finds a diamond, but unlike his fellow prisoner he is able to hide the diamond. The commander of the camp, a warlord called Captain Poison (David Harewood), notices Solomon's attempted theft and pursues him; however he is knocked unconscious by an explosion. Solomon buries the diamond, and they are both arrested and taken to a prison in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. Later on in the film we see that Captain Poison, released from prison, captures Solomon's son, Dia (Kagiso Kuypers), who has been on the run with his mother and siblings, and turns him into a brutal child soldier.

The film then cuts to the Zimbabwean mercenary Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio) whose assignment is trading weapons with the rebel soldiers in exchange for diamonds. Archer works for the mercenary Colonel Coetze, whom he served under in the 32 Battalion, known as a decorated unit of the South African Border War. 32 Battalion was composed of Angolan and Rhodesian soldiers and white South African officers. Colonel Coetze in turn is employed by the by South African diamond company executive Van De Kaap (Marius Weyers) and his deputy Simmons (Michael Sheen) who, as we learn later on in the film, use conflict diamonds to keep the price of diamonds high. Attempting to smuggle the diamonds out of Sierra Leone by goats (the diamonds are sewn into the goat's skin); he is arrested by soldiers on the border to Liberia, and put in to same prison as Solomon. This is where Archers learns of the red diamond that Solomon has found, as an injured Captain Poison is brought in and he starts raving about the huge diamond he saw Solomon hiding. Desperate for a

way to repay Coetze for the diamonds he lost when he was arrested, Archers gets infused with the idea of the big red diamond Captain Poison is raving about.

Solomon is trying to trace down his family through the endless lists of refugees organized by the UN when Archer catches up with him. Archer manages to team up with Solomon to find the diamond as they agree on helping each other, Archer will find his family and Solomon will find the diamond.

Archer encounters the American journalist, Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connolly), whom he brings into his plan of finding his diamond, when he realizes she can be of help to him. Maddy has a wish to write a story about the diamond trade going on in Sierra Leone causing the civil war, and is frustrated that she is unable to get to the sources that can provide her with facts. When meeting Archer she realizes that he holds many of the answers and facts that she is looking for and therefore embarks on a bargain to follow Archers and Solomon in the hunt for the diamond.

Maddy helps Solomon to a refugee camp where he miraculously finds his wife and two daughters. Here he learns that the RUF rebels have captured his son, also the refugee camp will not release any of the refugees before the heavy fighting of the civil war in Sierra Leone has decreased. Solomon is now determined to find the diamond in order to rescue his son and the rest of his family.

The PMF Archer works for is employed by the provisional government to take out the rebel groups and the group of three tracks them down after escaping the RUF soldiers attacking a news convoy. Sending Maddy off on a plane shipping foreigners out of the conflict zone, he gives her the facts that she consisting of a little book of names and dates. Solomon and Archer leave the camp on foot to find the diamond. They find the camp, which is filled with RUF rebels – including Solomon's son, Dia. We are witness to a painful reunion between the two where Dia refuses his father, being brainwashed by Captain Poison. Solomon again stands face to face with Captain Poison and is forced to find the diamond. The camp is then attacked by the PMF with Colonel Coetze in charge, and under the attack Solomon kills Captain Poison, hitting him to death with a shovel. Archer manages to save Dia, knowing that he will be helpful as a bargaining element towards Solomon. Finding the diamond buried in the ground, Archers kills Colonel Coetze and two other mercenaries as he realizes they would have killed both him and Solomon anyway. In the process he ends up being shot himself, now Dia emerges with a gun threatening the two, but Solomon

manages to talk Dia over and he sides with them. Wounded, but keeping it to himself, Archer flees with Solomon and Dia towards a mountaintop where his partner and pilot Nabil (Jimi Mistry) will come for their rescue. Nabil urges Archer to lose the others, as the plane cannot take them all. On the way towards the top Archer has lost too much blood to go on, Solomon carries him towards the top. However, realizing that he will not make it he gives Solomon the diamond and instructs him to contact Maddy when in safety. Shooting the pursuing mercenaries, Archer manages to make one last phone call to Maddy where he asks her to tell Solomon's story. We see Archer's blood seeping out over his arm and it drips and mixes with the red earth of Africa.

In the final section of the film we see Solomon meeting with diamond dealers in London, with Maddy as a photographing witness. He bargains the diamond dealers to not only bring him money, but also the rest of his family. We see Solomon reunited with his family, and Maddy's article on the trade of blood diamonds in a magazine. In the final scene we see Solomon entering the speaker's chair to a rounding applause in the Kimberly committee, the committee responsible for the Kimberly Process, which works to certify diamonds in order to curb the trading of conflict diamonds.

5.1.2 Case study

Blood Diamond is in keeping with the traditional action and adventure films of Hollywood in that it has a fast-paced narrative with explosions, fights and stunts, however it differs from this genre in the sense that this does not at all times during the film dominate over the dialogue and character development. The film is thus in keeping with the formal paradigm of Hollywood, but in addition there are elements added to the film that places it in the Transnational trend, making it a transnational action adventure.¹⁶⁰

In the same way as films in Accented cinema, which are often bi- or multi-lingual, *Blood Diamond* use different accents of English that are not standard. At the beginning of the film we hear Solomon speaking in Mende and we read subtitles. DiCaprio's character is from Rhodesia, and he speaks with strong South African accented English. When he meets the RUF soldiers he switches to the accent of Sierra Leone. Edward Zwick, the director of the film, allowed subtitles for the first minutes of the film, but then when he figured the audience had gotten used to hearing the accents, he took them out. This is very much part of the Transnational trend,

characters speak in their natural accents without it serving as an identifier of character, nationality or class.

The film deals with many challenges within the globalization we are experiencing today. It starts off by showing text and images from Sierra Leone explaining the audience the connection between consumers in the Western world buying diamonds causing the civil war in Sierra Leone and thus child soldiers and a nation of refugees and amputees. The film further deals with trading of weapons and conflict diamonds, the usage of Private Military Firms (PMFs) and mercenaries. Through the American character Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connelly) we are presented with the important role of the media documenting and researching issues revealing illegal trade, child soldiers and genocide. This film deals with those issues that Beck point out as the most critical challenges for the globalization process. The film reflects the ideology of neoliberalism in a transnational community. This transnational community is not only restricted to Africa, but it shows a connection to London, Haag, and obviously the United States, but also the international team of representatives of the international press and international organizations (IOs). It is made obvious that money is the key to this transnational society where politics plays second violin, and where political agreements have little, or no effect on a trade such as the trading of “Blood Diamonds” in Africa.

The opening scene shows us how innocent people in Sierra Leone was forced into slavery, this time not by white landowners, but by other Sierra Leoneans, however caused by a trade created, predominantly, by white Westerners. By tearing the Vandy family apart making them into: slave (Solomon), child soldier (Dia) and refugees (Jessie and N’Yanda Vandy) – they all represent a consequence of this conflict and the effects of globalization. The beginning of the film is very violent, and has similarities to the extremely violent and overwhelming opening scene of *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg, 1998), assaulting its audience with the cruel reality of war. The major difference here is, and which marks the new type of conflicts we see in armed conflicts, posing a new kind of security threat and thus calls for new approaches to handle, that the “soldiers” attacking are not wearing uniforms. Warfare is no longer an act of soldiers and governments, but of rebels and warlords fighting without recognizing the rules of human rights in warfare. By cutting off the villager’s hands the RUF commander Captain Poison creates a visual symbol of their distrust in

democratic values. Poison explains to the villagers: “The future is in your hands, no more hands, no more voting.” The film cross cuts to Haag where the democratic principles are at rule, however are just as ineffective as the democracy Poison is denouncing in his country. Here the film comments on the Western habit of enforcing democracy onto non-democratic nations through nation building, and that the democracy or bureaucracy of the UN is often just as ineffective.

Ironically, but highly intentionally from the director’s choosing, the RUF rebels in the film are wearing clothes that remind of us gangster rappers from the U.S. One of the characters, Captain Rambo, is wearing a Snoop Dog t-shirt, we later on in the film see rebel soldiers watching music videos of these gangster rappers holding up huge diamond jewelry. In the late 1990s and almost up until the finance crisis of 2008 the *Bling Bling* culture¹⁶¹ was very strong; particularly among Hip Hop rappers in the U.S. These would wear as much gold and diamond jewelry as possible, making it very trendy to wear diamonds. Archer explains the situation in Sierra Leone by saying “There it’s Bling Bling, here it’s Bling Bang.” *Blood Diamond* therefore had an important impact on increasing consumer awareness of diamond purchasing people in the West.

Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio) represents another Africa. He represents the white Africa, the mercenary who lost his parents through the violent struggles between the white and black in Zimbabwe, and who has now turned into a diamond smuggler using his advantage of knowing Africa and of his advantage as a white person with money and connections. Archer is a displaced character in many ways. He is a white man in a black continent. He still lives on the advantages of the white man in Africa, but he is still displaced in the sense that he has no sense of belonging and that he represents what black Africans loathe. Del Hornbuckle explains this point in his review of the film: “Danny is that complex white African who loves Africa equally to any black African. His emigrating ancestors tilled the soil, fought the wars, and lived and died in Africa. But his relationship is complicated by his presence as a “white African,” the sheer history of white people on the continent, and all the obligatory privileges that brings.”¹⁶² Without this sense of belonging he exploits the system and the continent he no longer believes in. When justifying his shady business to Maddy Bowen, he does so by referring to TIA, This is Africa. Archer has no family, he has no home, he is the very embodiment of the transnational society.

Blood Diamond critiques the use of Private Military Firms (PMFs). PMFs are often criticized for operating on the borderline of international law. Specializing in local conflicts, particularly those in Africa, these firms have developed a dual position of both fighting legitimate wars and dealing in the loop holes exploiting natural resources to their benefit. As they hold the control to one of the strongest currencies in conflicts, weapons, they also hold the key to natural resources controlled by those in need of arms. Archer trades arms for diamonds for an official PMF, which in turn is hired by the “legal” diamond trade. This PMF is later on in the film actually hired to retake Sierra Leone, which is a reference to the PMF Executive Outcome, which was hired by the provisional government in Sierra Leone to do exactly that in 1995. These close references to real incidents in Sierra Leone serves as a reality check on the film. Ironically the film has been listed as within the Adventure genre. However adventurous it may sound, the complexity of the privatization of military activity and the consequential lack of control it leads to is very much real. The rapid growth of the corporate powers that control the PMFs is challenging international law on warfare and is thus posing a security threat on a transnational level. *Blood Diamond* is displaying this complexity and critiquing that lack of control that IOs have over these types of developments with the legal framework that exists today. This critique also contributes to the argumentation that politics are losing its value to the TNCs, and warning us that if IOs do not revalue their rules and regulations on free trade these atrocities will continue to happen.

Dia, Solomon’s son is captured and forced into becoming a child soldier for the RUF. The scenes with the child soldiers are brutal and violent, the children are forced to shoot prisoners blindfolded, they are drugged down and they are encouraged to embrace the American gangster values. These values are introduced to them through music and music videos displaying gangster rappers with huge diamond necklaces. They are wearing torn hip-hop clothes and are constantly imitating the music videos shown on TVs that are scattered around the camp. We see the children gradually becoming harder and more emotionally weakened; when Dia finally sees his father he does not recognize him. The parallel between American Hip Hop gangsters and the child soldiers provide two potential readings. One is that we more clearly see the connection between the “blood diamond” trade, with its violence and abuse of children, and the Western consumers embracing this fashion. It is not fair to say that

this fashion was only restricted to Hip Hop, Jennifer Lopez and other female pop stars were fronting this fashion just as much. The film *Moulin Rouge* (Luhrman, 2001) revived the famous Marilyn Monroe hit “Diamonds are a girls best friend” and the capitalist motto of “spend, spend, spend” seemed to have gone into high gear. By using the rappers who introduced the “bling bling culture” as the very ironic inspirational source and the biggest consumer group of diamonds, Zwick managed to place the problem of a seemingly local conflict in the global or western conscience on a different level.

On another level the Western culture of Hip Hop gangsters are justifying violence to the RUF soldiers as. As Western culture in many ways are loathed in Africa, it is also a source of inspiration, particularly that of African Americans. In this sense this type of portrayal of violence presents violence as something normal, something to look up to. As these gangsters represent wealth and opportunities the child soldiers are idealizing them as role models. The RUF soldiers are speaking about politics and how they suffer because of the “white man” and that the government is in the pocket of the “white man”. Black Power projected by Hip Hop artists is something these men identify with.

The film music does not only consist of rap and Hip Hop, the film has both the typical action/adventure genre film score, but most importantly for this thesis; the film music is within what we can call world music¹⁶³ and reflect the local music in Sierra Leone. It is particularly in the beginning of the film when we are presented with big framings of landscapes. We are let known by the music that we are in Africa, in Sierra Leone. This type of music is mostly used in those rare moments of harmony in the film. When Africa is presented at its most harmonious and well functioning state we hear the traditional music of drums and children singing together. In those moments when things become dangerous, which is very often in the meeting with those elements that are directly or indirectly introduced by the Western world, we hear music that are non-traditional, or non-world music. This way the film music functions as a pointer to the audience in two ways. One, it introduces the location of the film by the easily identifiable African sound. Two, on a representational level it suggests that Africa, or Sierra Leone, can only be functional when it is true to its local customs and culture, and that it is dysfunctional when forced into the pits of capitalism in the globalization process.

The role of the female character in *Blood Diamond* is the American journalist, Maddy Bowen. She is a strong, independent woman who serves as the film's good conscious. She is an idealist with a goal of being able to make a difference through her work as a journalist. The role of the media in conflicts such as the one in Sierra Leone is a returning issue in many of the films in the Transnational trend. Maddy Bowen is willing to go far, even risk her life to get a good story, but she also knows that in order to get something in print, or actually getting people to read her articles it needs to reveal something delicate, and it needs to be related to the Western world. In one of the scenes between Archer and Bowen we see President Clinton in a TV interview in the background. Bowen makes a comment about how the Americans have failed to step up for Africa, especially after the failed attack in Mogadishu in 1993. She realizes that people in the West have gone tired of hearing about starving people in Africa due to their own internal conflicts. She needs to find a way of proving that global free trade are just as much causing these conflicts as the African's themselves. This is why she is onto Danny Archer as she sees the connection between the PMF he is working for and the global diamond trade. Through her character both the media and the ignorant masses of the Western world are being criticized for being only concerned with those stories that either have some kind of entertainment value, or directly affect them. There is nothing like a scandal, so if she can prove sensitive information about one of the leading diamond dealers, then that is worth the risk of her own life. At the same time Bowen's character represent the very Western ignorance that her character also serves to critique. She is the ignorant idealist who thinks she is untouchable because she is from the West. Being an idealist she actually believes in the goodness of people and she believes that the political system of IOs can be used to make a difference. She is the embodiment of the U.S. and she has a naïve logic that Archer challenges constantly as he is the opposite of her idealism. Archer reveals information to Bowen in order to get what he needs, and she is beginning to understand that her black and white logic is not applicable to the conditions in Sierra Leone. Eventually Bowen adapts Archer's methods of cutting some corners, this can be interpreted as Bowen/the U.S. needs to leave behind this discourse in reading the world, and start to absorb local knowledge in order to better understand how to deal with a situation.

The rest of the press team, which are killed by RUF rebels, shows the international presence in Sierra Leone. All of these characters are portrayed as the typical Magnum photographer and war journalist, all eager and almost suicidal in their attempt to get the best shots and stories. An international presence is also visible through the scenes where Solomon is desperately searching for his wife and children in the refugee camps the UN organizes. The portrayal of the humanitarian workers is somewhat different in this film than what we are used to seeing. In the first scene we see rather hostile UN workers who are organizing lists of names of people who are sent to refugee camps. Solomon is desperate and does not follow the line, he is harshly told to figure it out himself by the UN worker who says "...then God help you because I can't". This shows the hopelessness of this whole situation has even gotten to the humanitarian workers. In a sense it seems almost like they too have given up, the UN usually represent hope and rescue, but in the films in the Transnational trend the UN has a more ambiguous role. These films show the UN as a reluctant contributor handcuffed by its own rules of not interfering in internal conflicts, by being peacekeepers – not engaged in warfare and handcuffed by its own limiting rules. When Solomon finds his family inside a refugee camp, aided by Archer and Bowen, not the UN, the camp looks more like a prison camp than anything else. Solomon is brutally beaten to the ground when he tries to kiss his wife through the fence. Through Bowen the audience is informed about atrocities such as rape and violence against women and children occur in the refugee camps and when we see the vastness of the camp, the relief we instantly felt of Solomon's family being safe is taken away from us. To be able to get his family out of the camp is equally crucial as finding his son Dia and rescue him from the RUF.

All the characters have emotional journeys; they evolve from believing or disbelieving in the system, morals, and the greater good. Solomon adapts Archers trickery in order to rescue his family. Bowen cuts corners in order to help Solomon and exploits Archer in order to get her story. Archer is a constant throughout the film, backing out every time he gets too close to his emotions or to a person. His only enemy is his consciousness. As long as he does not feel anything, he is fine. Towards the end of the film Archer breaks with his original character and evolves from only caring for himself into sacrificing himself for Solomon and Bowen, for the greater good. As he is shot himself, he realizes that he will die anyway, and that by

sacrificing himself he can die thinking he has made an effort to do something good for others. By doing so Bowen managed to get her story and Solomon could tell his story to a panel in the UN. In other words, the film is implying that Archer's sacrifice laid to foundation for UN's Kimberly Process, which would serve to prevent illegal diamond trade. The film thus reinstates a hope for political institutions and that corporate power does not extend beyond the political power of IOs. This makes Bowen's idealism and belief in the system triumphant, and the audience is left with a sense of hope for the future, and the sense of actually being able to make a difference by engaging in social issues on a global level. Traditionally in films within the action genre the hyperbolic masculinity, as seen in Archer, Poison, and Coetze, has been regarded as an expression of American ideology regarding politics and gender, reasserting male power and privilege, according to Barry K. Grant. The more female valued characters of Solomon and Bowen are triumphant in this film; this can be read as a changing view of American ideology. The non-unilateral trend going on in Hollywood, evident through the films being produced belonging to the transnational category, is arguably a reflection of a change in Hollywood's political view which again reflects currents in society. In this sense the film can be argued to project softer values favoring peaceful and political approaches to global issues rather than the traditional brute force of the action hero.

This evolvement in characters is common in many of the films in the Transnational trend. The set up of the easily identifiable good and bad characters and then the ambivalent character that makes an emotional journey and redeems himself by choosing the good and sacrificing him self, is a seen in many variations in the Transnational trend. Archer represents the reluctant hero from Classic Hollywood and his emotional journey fits what Ray has called the "reconciliatory pattern".¹⁶⁴ By only acting on his own accord he represents the American value of individualism; however he does sacrifice himself for the greater good in the end, and thus represents the official value of willingness to help the community, in this instance the global community. This redemption and willingness to help leaves the audiences with hope, making them believe in the institutions that the film earlier has criticized. This is the film's weakest point if the film is to be read as a critique of the IOs, the media, global free trade and capitalism. The fact that the film has on an open, but positive ending proves that Hollywood has to keep with its paradigm for one, but also that Hollywood

productions are unable to critique the very system that keeps the industry alive. In this sense, an in opposition to Transnational film, the Transnational trend will never really challenge the capitalist system, the current ideology that controls the world system is projected onto the audience as it would be in any other Hollywood production.

5.1.3. Additional Comments

The film also received attention for bringing the theme of conflict diamonds onto the agenda of the larger public. The UN arranged a screening of the film followed by a debate at the UN Headquarters.¹⁶⁵ Amnesty International posted on their website that they were proud to support the film.¹⁶⁶ However, all reactions were not of the positive. The film did not go unnoticed by the diamond industry, and multi-million sums were raised through organizations like the World Diamond Council (WDC) and the Diamond Information Centre in order to stand against the impact they knew such a huge Hollywood production would have on the public. Many grand names were connected to this campaign, even Nelson Mandela got involved, sending a letter to Alan F. Horn, the president of Warner Bros, and director Edward Zwick, expressing his concerns over the potential effects of the film. He said; “it would be deeply regrettable” if “Blood Diamond” would lead to the “destabilization of African diamond producing countries.”¹⁶⁷ This costly P.R offensive worked hard to improve the diamond industry’s image saying that combating illegal diamonds is their top priority by following the Kimberly Process.¹⁶⁸ As a result this film intensified the focus on an industry that has a dirty history, and people’s awareness of diamond’s origin and implications as consumer product was brought onto the agenda for the larger public. By releasing the film close to Christmas the producers was hoping to influence people when buying Christmas gifts. Director Edward Zwick announced to National Public Radio when asked about why he refused WDC’s request to add information about the Kimberly Process to the film; “What I wanted to create in their minds is consciousness. A purchase of a diamond just has to be an informed purchase.”¹⁶⁹ Jonathan Oppenheimer, a director of De Beers, the world's largest supplier of rough diamonds, responded to Zwick’s comment by saying: “Can you imagine its impact on the Christmas-buying audience in America if the message is not carried through that this is something of the past?”¹⁷⁰ His fear was legitimate as the

U.S. stands for 65% of diamond purchases and 60 % of the world's diamonds originate from Africa.¹⁷¹ Luckily for the diamond business, unfortunately for the victims of the blood diamond trade, the impact on consumer's consciousness does not, as opposed to diamonds, last forever. As Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst with NPD Group, stated: "If the movie is very negative, there could be a three-week blip in sales but then people get over it. Consumers will move on".¹⁷² He is obviously right, nonetheless it is a positive development that directors and producers dare to be critical of free trade quagmires, and attempt to find an environment in which they can produce such films. It is also positive that audiences worldwide are made aware of the dangers related to globalization and consumerism. However, it is yet to see if there ever will be such an environment in Hollywood that allows for directors who challenges the system down to the core.

5.2 BABEL (Iñárritu, 2006)

According to Hamid Naficy Accented films favor characters that are sad, lonely and alienated, this is very much the case in *Babel*.¹⁷³ The film has picked up on many of the same principles that are recognized in Accented, Displaced, and Exilic cinema and put them into the Hollywood format and mode of production.

The film from 2006 was directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu and written by Guillermo Arriaga. It stars an ensemble cast, with Cate Blanchett and Brad Pitt as the two most known stars. The film was nominated for several awards, including Academy Awards in which it won Best Original Score, and it won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture — Drama.

The film was financed through Paramount Vantage, which is part of Paramount Classic, which again is a part of Viacom. Paramount Vantage was originally intended to produce mainly documentaries, but premiere with a motion picture with *Babel* in 2006. It has later co-produced films such as *No Country for Old Men* (Cohen Brothers, 2007) and *There Will Be Blood* (Anderson, 2007) with Miramax. However, Paramount Vantage has failed to deliver films with financial profit and key departments such as marketing, distribution and physical film production have thus been relocated back to Paramount Pictures. According to Variety the film did not make money for Paramount Vantage, even though it has already earned more than four and a half times its estimated production budget of \$25 million by March 2007.¹⁷⁴

5.2.1 Synopsis

The film has four stories that interrelate with each other. Two of the stories take place in Morocco, one in Japan, and one in the U.S./Mexico. The film starts with the stories in Morocco.

In a remote desert landscape in Morocco, Abdullah buys a rifle from his friend Hassan Ibrahim. His two sons, Yussef and Ahmed, are using the rifle when herding their goats. As the boys are bored they start a game of shooting and testing the rifle's three kilometers range. They accidentally shoot at a Western tourist bus, the bullet hits Susan Jones, an American woman from San Diego, and she is critically hurt. She is traveling with her husband Richard Jones. The two boys realize what they have done and hide the rifle in the hills.

From television news programs we learn that the US government interprets the incident as a terrorist act and is pressuring the Moroccan government to find those responsible. The Moroccan police manage to trace the rifle back to Hassan, the police roughly interrogate Hassan and his wife, they reveal that the rifle was given to him by a Japanese man, and then sold it to Abdullah. Believing that the American woman that they shot is dead they fearfully confess what they have done to their father. As they flee from their house, retrieving the rifle as they go, the police corner them on the rocky slope of a hill and open fire. Ahmed is hit in the leg; Yussef then returns fire, striking one police officer in the shoulder. The police continue shooting, eventually hitting Ahmed in the back, seemingly killing him. As his father rages with grief, Yussef eventually surrenders and confesses to all the crimes, begging for his family and medical assistance for his brother. The police take him into custody. The family's fate is unresolved.

The movie's first plot is interspersed with scenes of Richard and Susan. The couple is on vacation in Morocco. After their third infant child died from SIDS their marriage is strained and they went to Morocco in order to communicate their frustration, guilt, and blame. Their other two children are at home in San Diego with their Mexican nanny. When Susan is shot on the tour bus, Richard orders the bus driver to the nearest village with a doctor. She receives enough treatment there to stabilize her. The other tourists reluctantly wait for some time, as they are overcome with fear from the locals and the heat they demand to leave. Richard begs the tour

group to wait for the ambulance, which never arrives, but the bus leaves without them while Richard is on the phone. Having contacted the US embassy using the village's only phone, they are taken care of by the locals and the bus's tour guide who stays behind. Political issues between the US and Morocco prevents quick help, but eventually a helicopter arrives in the village. After five days in the hospital, Susan recovers and is sent home.

Simultaneously we are introduced to Chieko Wataya. She is a deaf-mute rebellious Japanese teenager who is sexually frustrated and bitter towards her father, teenage boys and traumatized by her mother's recent suicide. She fails in her attempt to seduce her dentist, and at a restaurant she removes her underwear and exposes herself some teenage boys. She is disappointed in love, again, when she and some friends join some boys at a disco. Returning home Chieko meets two police detectives who are looking for her father. She finds one of the detectives very attractive and she later invites him to her apartment where she lives with her father. She explains the detective how her father was asleep when her mother jumped off the balcony, and that she herself was the one who witnessed it, wrongly thinking that this is what the detective is investigating. The detective explains to her that the police want to talk to him about a rifle her father supposedly gave away to a Hassan Ibrahim on a hunting trip to Morocco. Chieko then reveals the real reason for inviting him over, and approaches him nude and tries to seduce him. The detective resists the temptation, and he leaves, Chieko gives him a note and tells him not to read it until he has gone.

On his way out the detective meets Chieko's father, Yasujiro, who confirms the hunting trip to Morocco where he gave Hassan, his hunting guide, the rifle as a gesture of gratitude. When leaving the detective offers his condolences for his wife's suicide, when mentioning the balcony Yasujiro angrily replies that his wife shot herself in the head and that it was Chieko who found her. When Yasujiro enters the apartment Chieko is standing nude on the balcony, she leans towards her father who comforts her. We see the detective reading the note in a bar the content of the note is never revealed, and the issue of the two conflicting stories concerning the suicide is not resolved.

The fourth plot of the film is taking place in California, San Diego and Mexico. The Mexican nanny, Amelia, is taking care for Susan and Richard Jones' children while they are on vacation in Morocco. Amelia is trying to get someone else to watch

the children as she is going to her son's wedding in Mexico. When no one can take care of the children she decides to bring them along. Her nephew, Santiago, offers to drive them. The journey there passes with no drama, the kids are introduced to the, to them overwhelming, Mexican culture as they are driving through Mexico on their way to Tijuana. Rather than staying the night in Mexico, Amelia decides it is best to take the children back with her to the U.S. with Santiago. He has been drinking heavily in the wedding, and when the border police find his behavior strange, they decide to check them. Amelia has passport for all four, but no written consent from the children's parents allowing her to take them out of the U.S. Santiago, who is drunk and obviously cannot afford to be in this situation, speeds the car, and trespasses the border. He eventually leaves Amelia and the children in the desert with no food or water. When morning comes Amelia decides to leave the children in order to get help. She commands them not to move, but when she returns with a border patrol car, after having been arrested, they are nowhere to be found. In custody she learns that the children are found, that their father, Richard, is very angry, but has decided not to press charges against her. She is deported from the country and sent back to Mexico. She pleads, saying that she has lived in the U.S. for 16 years, and tended the children since birth, but as she has worked illegally she is deported nonetheless. We see her on the street in Mexico with her son wearing the same red dress that she wore for his wedding.

In the very last scene of the film the phone conversation between Richard and Amelia is repeated, but now we hear it from Richard's end of the phone, in the start of the film it was from Amelia's end. We learn that Richard agrees to her going to her son's wedding as Susan's sister can watch the children. The next morning we hear another conversation where we learn that Susan's sister cannot watch the children after all, and that is why Amelia decides to take them with her.

5.2.2. Case study

The film's interrelation of four different stories spread over three continents is making this film perhaps the most obviously transnational of all the films in the trend. The way that the characters are connected to each other exemplifies the interconnectivity and transnationality of the world today. From the remote village in

Morocco to the urban cartoon-like Tokyo there are strings between these characters. The director and screenwriter, Iñárritu and Arriaga, have said that they wanted to create a film about symbolic borderlines. The film thus displays not only the physical transnationality, but also the effect the symbolic borderlines have on our lives in these transnational social spaces.

Babel, which derives from the Hebrew Bab-ilu, "Gate of God," and Bal-al, "confusion", was the name given to the Tower built in Babylon as recorded in Genesis. The mighty Nimrod built the tower on a plain in Shinar, extending to the heavens. Realizing that the people who built it were capable of achieving anything, God confused their language so that they would not understand each other and scattered them over the face of the earth. Director Iñárritu and screenwriter Arriaga have transferred the concept of Babel to how we conduct our lives today, in a world threatened by terrorism and divided by language, race, money and religion. The title is partly meant to refer to the film's own multilingual nature, with English, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and sign language all coming into play. The film thus places itself in tradition of Accented film by using non-value free accents or languages. Here the film breaks with the traditional Hollywood paradigm. In addition to the usage of several languages, the film also includes sign language. Through the character of Chieko we are introduced to a world of no sound. It is particularly the scene at the disco, where the sound of rough techno mixes with no sound, that presents the viewers with the sense of alienation the disability of not hearing causes. This effect adds to the experimentation of languages and ways of communicating that is one of the characteristics of the Transnational trend. The American couple traveling to Morocco is incapable of communicating with each other. Despite speaking the same language, there is a huge gap between Richard and Susan as husband and wife. They are traumatized by the loss of their son to SIDS and have drifted so far from each other that the words they utter to each other become impossible for the other to understand. It is first when they have to stand together in order to understand the foreign language and culture surrounding them that they start to communicate with each other in a way that is clear and free from interpretive possibilities.

The feeling of not being heard and solely judged by her status and accent affects Amelia as well. When arrested in the dessert for having abducted the Jones' children, the police officer questioning her is not listening to her story but rather acts on

assumptions from her status and his previous experience with illegal immigrants. Amelia is reduced from being a caring person whom the children love, to a demonized mass of people unwanted by the American officials. By her actions Amelia has suddenly lost her voice, she cannot be heard. In spite of her having lived her life in the U.S. for over 16 years she has no more a valid voice than that of a Mexican who just crossed the border. Amelia's story puts a focus on an issue that is important not only for Mexicans and Americans, but for the whole world which is dominated by people who operate on borderlines, illegal workers, refugees constantly on the move, and the general mobility or lack of mobility within transnational spaces.

The film goes beyond the perils of translation, and focus on the way the contrasted cultures fail to understand each other. This film is exploring the drama occurring when core and periphery cultures meet. When American Susan is shot, her husband Richard has to rely on the kindness of Moroccan strangers in order to get help, he does not know a word of Arabic and his money has no value here. The ways of the upper class San Diego resident is not applicable where he is stranded in Morocco, and Richard is made helpless. In addition to despairing over his wife being shot, he feels a deep frustration of his disempowerment. He suspects that tour guide Anwar is holding back information regarding Susan's medical condition, which has been assessed by the local veterinarian. While Richard and Susan try to listen to the meaning behind unknown words uttered by an old woman when she offers Susan some pain easing opium to smoke, the subtitles of the UR language are removed too, and the viewers are left feeling just as lost and disempowered as Richard and Susan.

Cultural misunderstandings also occur on a larger scale when the U.S. government translates one shot American citizen into a terrorist attack, creating an international incident. In the film we see how media contributes to build up the anticipation of a new international conflict possibly caused by transnational terrorist groups. Both the American couple and the Moroccan shepherd families become victims of this diplomatic dispute. The families are brutally interrogated and one of the sons eventually shot as a result of the local police trying to put a lid on the issue as quickly as possible as Morocco cannot afford the terrorist stamp. Richard and Susan's aid is delayed due to diplomatic arrangements that need clarification. This exemplifies how misinterpreted situations can turn a personal drama into an international crisis, leaving the individuals disempowered to help themselves.

The film introduces the viewers to different cultures than that of the U.S., the only times the American culture is present is when it is displaced in the other cultures. Mike and Debbie, the Jones children, are visibly scared when a Mexican man fires a gun at the wedding, clearly these two cultures have different understandings of a gun being fired. The overwhelming Mexican cultures of music and colors seem to fascinate the children in a way that both shock and thrill them. In one scene Santiago kills a chicken by breaking its neck, the American children are mortified, but being the minority they soon adapt to the Mexican way and plays along with the other children. Susan and Richard are both physically and culturally displaced in Morocco, in one of the early scenes of the film Susan throws away the ice cubes Richard has put in his class, she is afraid of bugs. When placed in the middle of nowhere in Morocco with a local veterinarian to tend to her, she is panic-stricken. It is only when they stop fighting against the local customs, and for Susan that turning point is when she accepts the opium offered her, that the couple is able to both communicate with the locals and each other.

Babel fits the Transnational trend on almost all levels. It uses different languages, even the lack of language, it presents the meeting of core and periphery cultures, it explores challenges of the globalization process, and it is in itself transnational. It contains the elements of both Displaced and Accented cinema at the same time as it is keeping with Hollywood's paradigm.¹⁷⁵

5.3 Slumdog Millionaire (Boyle, 2008)

Slumdog Millionaire is based on the novel *Q&A* written by Vikas Swarup, an Indian diplomat, it was published in 2005. Screenwriter Simon Beaufoy created the adaptation for the film; it was directed by Danny Boyle, and co-directed by Lovleen Tandan. The film was extremely well received by audiences worldwide, and it was nominated for ten Oscars, and won eight. It also won seven BAFTA Awards, five Critics' Choice Awards, and four Golden Globes. The film had a limited release in 2008 and received critical acclaim and enjoyed a wider release in the UK in 2009, soon following in the U.S. The film's distribution rights for Northern American were acquired by Warner Bros. Independent, and the international rights by Pathé. However, when Warner Bros. Independent was closed down the rights went to its parenting studio, Warner Bros. The large studio did not believe in the project's

commercial potential and wanted to release it straight to DVD. In the end Fox Searchlight cut a deal with Warner Bros. where they shared the distribution of the film. The film was considered a risk project, Fox Searchlight had the expertise that Warner Bros. lacked in marketing smaller films as *Slumdog Millionaire* first was assumed to be.

5.3.1. Synopsis

The film takes place in Mumbai, India. We are introduced to Jamal, a slumdog who works as a chai-wallah, or tea-boy at a call-center. He is a contestant in the immensely popular TV-show “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?” a show that was exported from Britain to India in 2000. Jamal has answered most of the questions correctly, but is now arrested for cheating. He is interrogated and tortured in prison; this is where the film starts flashbacking through Jamal’s life, as the numerous incidents of his journey through life are the reasons why he knows the answer to the questions.

The reason Jamal is on the game show is not in order to get the money, but in order to get the girl that he loves, Latika. Latika has been his first and only love throughout his life in the slums. They met on the night their parents got killed in an attack on Muslims in India. Salim, Jamal’s older brother, refuses to allow Latika to share shelter with the brothers, but eventually has to give in to Jamal’s persistence and allow her into the group. Jamal’s journey through life has been a constant search for Latika as they were separated when Jamal and his brother, Salim, escape the brute gangster Maman. The brothers find her and Salim kills Maman as they escape. The killing of Maman leads to Salim’s own gangster career working for the rival gangster Jamed. Salim claims Latika for his own, which breaks the tight bond both between Jamal and his brother and Latika. Latika ends up becoming Jamed’s girlfriend and is badly treated. Several years later Jamal finds Salim by using a computer database at his work at the call centre. The brothers reunite, which again brings Jamal closer to Latika. She tries to run away with him, but is captured by Jamed’s men, among them Salim, who cut her across her face with a knife as retribution. Trapped both economically and psychologically by Jamed, Latika does not dare to run away again. This is when Jamal realizes that by entering “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” he can win the money and the fame that will allow Latika to run away with him.

On the last night of the game show, when Jamal can either win 10 million rupees or lose it all, Salim sacrifices himself for the lovers. He gives Latika both the keys to his car and his mobile phone. He knows that the only number Jamal knows is his brother's. He sends Latika off and locks himself in a bathroom in the house where Jamal is throwing a party. He fills the bathtub with money, and when Jamal realizes what has happened (the TV show is on in the background, and suddenly Latika's voice is heard speaking to Jamal), he breaks down the bathroom door where Salim is awaiting with guns in his hands. Salim shoots Jamal and as many as he can before he himself is shot, bleeding all over the money bills turning them all red.

Meanwhile, as Jamal has been released from jail, won the game show, and become a celebrity, the whole country is cheering for this underdog who has moved upward. Latika and Jamal meet at the train station where they have attempted to do their escape from before and the film ends with a long happy kiss. At the very end over the credits the couple and several hundred other people break into a traditional Bollywood dance number.

5.3.2. Case Study

As the film is actually taking place in India and the main characters in the film are Indian it is obvious that the film fits the non-American protagonist and non-American place of action criteria of the Transnational trend. However, the film does not become less transnational due to its Indian content and characters. The transnational presence is very much present in the film. Robert Koehler explains this in *Cineaste*: "...the film's setting is the new era of globalism, in which India is undergoing its own revolution."¹⁷⁶ This era of globalism and its Indian revolution is presented in the film through Jamal's life story. There is a visible change in India's scenery and an increasing international presence through tourism and trade in the Indian everyday-life, which also affects Jamal's life. One of the earliest signs of this kind of presence is when Jamal and his friends rip off some naïve American tourists by both stripping their car and by them giving Jamal money after having been beaten by the Indian driver (which they knew would happen). The female tourist responds to Jamal's remark that "this is India" by giving him a huge amount of money and saying that "this is America". Jamal is earning good money at the Taj Mahal pretending to be a guide, in other words he is taking advantage of the Western tourist's ignorance.

Later on in the film the transnational presence announces itself through the call-centre where Jamal works. Here these Indian people are learning about Scottish geography and culture in order to be able to communicate with the customers they are talking to in Scotland. This scene indicates India's growing global influence through both computer science and service workers providing the Western populace. Jamal is connected to these areas of India's growth and they serve as his tools to upward social mobility. The film is thus portraying the sense of hope for India's future as a nation developing into prosperity. High tech and manufacturing sectors in India has exploded and thus created a middle-class, which did not exist in Indian economy earlier. Jamal represents the underclass "slumdogs" that now have the opportunity to move upwards socially. The Internet and communication systems of today are creating jobs that never before existed, and India is basing its economy on these very jobs. Jamal's progression lies in the opportunities presented to him by globalization, particularly in the last part of the film. Jamal is also the stable moral character in the film. He never doubts what is right and what is wrong. He chooses love and family, he resents his brother's involvement with gangsters and he chooses to work hard in order to rise on the social ladder. He is Horatio Alger: rising from rags to riches through hard work. The film is in this sense a celebration of the globalization process and the opportunities it brings with it for some.

Visually, India's growing importance on a global level is shown in the film through high-rise buildings being built all over the city. It is a symbol of India's economic rise and newly assumed status as a super power. Salim is connected to these buildings and those elements that form the underworld that this development apparently results in. In this sense this part of India's global growth is regarded as something negative and dangerous for India too. Salim, who throughout the film is leaning towards a more ambiguous moral stance, chooses to sacrifice his brother and his friend Latika in order to secure his own financial position and upward social mobility. However, he finds that his mobility is very restricted and his new financial and social position comes at a very dire price. As many of the characters in film in the Transnational trend, Salim progresses from being an individualistic opportunist only caring for himself into sacrificing himself for his brother and Latika. The symbolic act of bleeding over what is already blood money is his way of repenting what he has done to his brother, friend, and country. We can interpret this as a critique of the

direction India is taking, and a warning is issued that India needs to control the rapid changes of globalization in order to prevent a growing underworld of gangsters to unfold freely.

The language in the film is mostly in English, but there are long stretches in the film that are in Hindi. These stretches are subtitled. The English spoken is mainly accented English, with mainly Indian accent, but also stitches of German, Scottish and American accents. The film thus fits with the criterion of being accented. The music also compliments this criterion. The film was awarded an Oscar for Best Original Score and Best Original Song¹⁷⁷ and was written by A. R. Rahman. The music is a kind of blend between Western pop-music and Indian pop-music, sprinkled with Indian traditional songs and sounds.

The film communicates with a Western audience as it has many references to the Western culture. It also communicates references from Indian and Asian culture and history, perhaps more so than vice versa. The film reveals glimpses of how Indians perceive themselves, both in the traditional Indian society and in relation to the new economic status it enjoys globally. It is an important film in the sense that it provides a Western audience with portrayal of a lesser-known culture, and provides an understanding of global changes. The important issue of this film and of the Transnational trend in general, is not whether the films present a realistic portrayal Third world countries or not, but whether they contribute to broaden the amount of interest and knowledge among Westerners to a major or minute degree. It also prepares audiences for what constitutes World Cinema, in a sense Hollywood is preparing to let go of its cultural hegemony by producing films that remind us of World Cinema films. On the other hand, Hollywood controls most means of distribution making it impossible for any non-Hollywoodian cinema to reach out as far as those distributed by the large studios in Hollywood. The Transnational trend can thus be seen as an attempt to appropriate what already exists on the outside. More than half of Hollywood's Box Office earnings come from outside North America, it is a genial marketing strategy for Hollywood to move in the direction of World Cinema.

However much the film has appropriated from World Cinema, Accented and even to some extent Displaced cinema, *Slumdog Millionaire* is Hollywood in DNA. The film is more or less an Indian version of *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994).

It is so in keeping with the Hollywood paradigm that it almost becomes a parody. Being labeled a risk project from the very beginning; making a film about an Indian boy set in India with no stars, neither international nor Indian, this is pretty much doomed as a failure, or a risk projects. In order to make it a hit, director Danny Boyle knew he had to follow some successful mode of storytelling Hollywood-style. And so he did. He tells a story of an underdog, a Hollywood favorite. The story is a typical Dickensian story; it is *Oliver Twist* taking place in the slums of Mumbai rather than the gutters of London. Further it is told as a feel-good comedy, not a drama, according to Boyle it was meant to be funny when commenting the torture scenes in prison.¹⁷⁸ A feel-good comedy is an easier sell than a Third World drama. Despite the fact that the protagonist is electrocuted while in prison and a 11 year old boy is blinded by acid by the adults he thinks is looking after him, the Fox Searchlight, who specialize in marketing narrow films, found it unproblematic to label it a comedy when convenient and drama when that would serve it better.¹⁷⁹ The director himself criticizes how the film is marketed as a kind of *Mamma Mia* film (Lloyd, 2008), which is going to make an audience disappointed.¹⁸⁰

CHAPTER 6

A Transnational Narrative

6.0 Conclusion

The Transnational trend in Hollywood emerged in the post-9/11 period and reflected the change in American self-perception and the need for both Hollywood and the U.S. to redefine its identity. The trend differed from Postmodern cinema in that it leaves its audience with a sense of hope and a sense of ability to make an impact within the framework provided by the dominant ideology of neoliberal capitalism. Even though it has kept the postmodern tradition of portraying a world in chaos, resulting from the ongoing globalization process, it has returned to many of the traits of modern film tradition, such as the reluctant hero and the reconciliatory pattern by featuring characters empowered by upward social mobility presented to them through the opportunities of globalization. Films such as *Slumdog Millionaire* portray this positive reading of globalization and transnationality. Though most of the films in the Transnational trend are critical of globalization and the complications that comes with the rapid changes in this process, the films never criticize the ideology as such. It provides its viewers with opportunities and alternatives of how to navigate within the existing system by providing us with happy endings where the individual actually can make a (global) difference.

As U.S.-made films can expect large enough audiences around the world to make a profit, the risky project of launching films with a non-American point of view pose less of a risk than earlier. Projects such as *Babel* and *Slumdog Millionaire* goes to show that filmmakers today can afford riskier ventures, and thus more innovative works, since their investment is virtually guaranteed to reap solid financial returns.¹⁸¹ *Slumdog Millionaire* has now been seen by more people in the U.S. than worldwide, *Babel* got a slow start in the U.S box office, however after its wide release it made more than four and a half times its estimated production budget.¹⁸² Hollywood cinema and independent cinema will thrive because a growing audience both in the U.S. and abroad will see these kinds of films. The future of the Transnational trend, and independent cinema in general, are unfortunately in a predicament due to the financial situation today, however, as the financial crisis further concretizes the

interconnectedness of the world there might just be a space for these kinds of films and different point of view to grow and develop further after all. As Appadurai predicted the U.S. may construct a narrative that gives way to diasporic networks where patriotism could become plural, serial, contextual and mobile. I believe that such a narrative has been constructed in the Transnational trend and it can be argued that this trend constitutes an idiom that captures the collective interest of many groups in translocal solidarities, cross-border mobilizations, and postnational identities.¹⁸³

No matter whether we are controlled by market forces or not, the belief in politicians and the urgency to act has been reawakened both by the malpractice of the Bush administration, and by Obama's presidential campaign basing its strong points on hope. Catastrophes such as *Hurricane Katrina*, and the U.S. government's inability to respond to it, has increased the awareness of climate changes and the type of catastrophes that can occur even in the U.S. It has pushed forward a reaction to the indifference towards war, death, poverty, job loss, natural disaster, torture, and environmental degradation that our globalized capitalist foundation has allowed for.¹⁸⁴ The Transnational trend in Hollywood indicates that there has been a shift towards a less navel-transfixed focus among the American populace and an evolvment from *laissez-faire* to embracing of social activism. At the same time we are aware that everything that the image-making machines of Hollywood are fitted to suit are market needs. Though it is plausible to assume that politicians and people have become aware of the power of TNCs and is adjusting to these challenges by exploring what eventually has to emerge in the other end, Hollywood is still a market run industry and the Transnational trend is thus not based on a political or cosmopolitan incentive. Our institutions, economic and political, have to adjust to the irreversible process of globalism, and thus something different need to emerge. The Transnational trend in Hollywood can be regarded as being part of this process. We are reorienting ourselves, both Americans and non-Americans, in a globalized world where glocal is a keyword and where eventually the global-local axis will expand into a local-local axis in the future as predicted by Ulrich Beck. As global markets are expanding Hollywood cannot afford to disregard these, thus we will most likely see more of films crossing borders. However, due to the present financial climate and the increased corporate rather than artistic control in Hollywood, we are also more likely to see more risk-averse films. How this is articulated in future films is hard to predict,

but due to the financial impetus of Hollywood films will still need to use a transnational narrative in order to communicate with its global market.

Is the trend a positive consequence of globalization? Yes, but it does not challenge globalization as a system or ideology. It is hard to define something as an authentic culture today, and that nothing can stay immune to influences with such a broad reach as Hollywood enjoys. However, is it not positive that Hollywood has adapted new voices from the periphery culture? Appadurai predicted in 1996 that various media forms would assume variations of cosmopolitanism, and that particularly cinema would evolve from local into global and lead outward to transnational sources and structures.¹⁸⁵ The Transnational trend is an indication that his predictions are verified. This is also an indication that the “White Man’s Privilege” is about to shift as suggested by Henrik Thune. The Transnational trend is thus more concerned with a global imagination. Nevertheless, globalism is irreversible and the Transnational trend can be read as a celebration of globalization providing us with both information and interesting perspectives of what challenges this process is posing. The films within this trend may not be critiquing globalization and capitalism as an ideology, but they set out to make us better citizens of the global-local community by channeling us towards a local-local axis.

From this point of view, the Transnational trend is a positive formation that has emerged from Hollywood and globalization and conceived in this way it could serve as a basis for a global cosmopolitanism. Popular cinema has through this trend embraced a transnational aesthetic and Hollywood has formed a new transnational narrative.

6.1 Further Studies

While studying this subject I have encountered a number of interesting questions that unfortunately were beyond the scope of this essay. In my research I discovered elements surrounding this trend, some early and some late in the process. However, as I discovered that it was necessary to first map out what constitutes the trend and its background, that alone formed what constitutes this master’s thesis. I believe that this topic is both interesting and important and will thus point to some topics that deserve more attention.

I have already mentioned the discussion of whether or not to call this trend a genre. There are many theories within Genre theory speaking for it being so, but then again there are also some that speak against it. It would take a fair amount of research to map out whether or not there should be something called a Transnational genre, or a Globalized genre and I would be very interested in reading a discussion on this topic.

While working on the part of the thematic and formal paradigm of Hollywood I got very enthusiastic about the idea of analyzing some of the films from an American Imagery point of view. It would be interesting to see how symbols, representations and images are fitting in, or not, with American mythology in the Transnational trend. This was unfortunately also beyond the limits of this thesis, and something I had to choose not to cover. In this study it could also be possible to include research on what forms as potential global imagination and the imagination as a social practice.¹⁸⁶

Finally, many of the films in the Transnational trend have depended on the reception they gained at international film festivals. These festivals serve as transnational networks depriving Hollywood of a monopoly on distribution and selection of image flows to a certain degree. It would be interesting to find out more about how important these kinds of festivals, and their awards, are for the marketing process and general reception of the films in the Transnational trend, particularly those labeled “risky projects.”

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<http://www.amnestyusa.org/business-and-human-rights/conflict-diamonds/page.do?id=1051176>
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/03/movies/03sant.html?_r=1
<http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/>
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec06/diamonds_12-04.html
<http://money.cnn.com/2006/09/11/news/com>
<http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=awardcentral&jump=contenders&id=actor&articleid=VR1117986990&cs=1>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slumdog_Millionaire
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamma_Mia!_%28film%29
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/video/2009/jan/13/danny-boyle-slumdog-millionaire>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babel_%28film%29#cite_note-Mojo-9

Filmography

This is a list of films that are mentioned and discussed throughout this thesis, as well as many of the most important films within the Transnational trend in Hollywood.

All That Heaven Allows (Douglas Sirk, 1955)
Amores Perros (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2000)
Babel (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006)
Battle of Red Cliff (John Woo, 2008)
Black Hawk Down (Ridley Scott, 2001)
Behind Enemy Lines (John Moore, 2001)
Blood Diamond (Edward Zwick, 2006)
Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942)
Chinatown (Roman Polanski, 1974)
Dances with Wolves (Kevin Costner, 1990)
Fahrenheit 9/11 (Michael Moore, 2004)
Forrest Gump (Robert Zemeckis, 1994)
Hotel Rwanda (Terry George, 2004)
Imitation of Life (Douglas Sirk, 1959)
Insomnia (Skjoldberg, 1997 & Christopher Nolan, 2002)
The International (Tom Tykwer, 2009)
Kandahar (Moshen Makhmalbaf, 2001)
Kite Runner (Marc Forster, 2007)
Lions for Lambs (Robert Redford, 2007)
Mamma Mia film (Phyllida Lloyd, 2008)
Michael Clayton (Tony Gilroy, 2007)
Minority Report (Steven Spielberg, 2002)
Mr. Smith Goes to Hollywood (Frank Capra, 1939)
Natural Born Killers (Oliver Stone, 1994)
No Country for Old Men (Ethan and Joel Cohen, 2007)
O'Horten (Bent Hamer, 2007)
Pulp Fiction (Quentin Tarrantino, 1994)
Rendition (Gavin Hood, 2007)
Reservoir Dogs (Quentin Tarrantino, 1992)
Slumdog Millionaire (Danny Boyle, 2008/09)
Syriana (Stephen Gaghan, 2005)
Schindler's List (Steven Spielberg, 1993)
Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939)
Three Faces of Eve (Nunnally Johnson, 1957)
Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese, 1976)
There Will Be Blood (Paul Thomas Anderson, 2007)
The Valley of Eliah (Paul Haggis, 2007)
We Were Soldiers (Randall Wallace, 2002)
21 Grams (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2003)

Appendix I

Schedule of films in the Transnational Trend. All information is gathered from

<http://www.boxofficemojo.com> and

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_years_in_film

YEAR	FILM	DIRECTOR	DISTRIBUTION	U.S. Total	WorldwideTotal
2001/2 002 (U.S.)	<i>Kandahar</i>	Mohsen Makhmalbaf	Avatar – Independent	\$1,418,314	\$6,839,692
2001	<i>Black Hawk Down</i>	Ridley Scott	Columbia Pictures	\$108,638,745	\$64,350,906
2002	<i>We Were Soldiers</i>	Randall Wallace	Paramount Pictures	\$78,122,718	\$36,538,066
2003	<i>Lost in Translation</i>	Sophia Coppola	Focus Features (Universal Pictures)	\$44,585,453	\$75,138,403
2004	<i>The Day After Tomorrow</i>	Roland Emmerich	20 th Century Fox	\$186,740,799	\$357,531,603
2004	<i>Fahrenheit 9/11</i>	Michael Moore	Lions Gate Entertainment- Independent	\$119,194,771	\$103,252,111
2004	<i>Hotel Rwanda</i>	Terry George	Lions Gate Entertainment/ United Artists	\$23,530,892	\$10,351,351
2004	<i>Team America</i>	Trey Parker	Paramount Pictures	\$32,786,074	\$18,121,348
2005	<i>Jarhead</i>	Sam Mendes	Universal Pictures	\$62,658,220	\$34,231,778
2005	<i>The Constant Gardener</i>	Fernando Meirelles	Focus Features (Universal Pictures)	\$33,579,797	\$82,466,670
2005	<i>Syriana</i>	Stephen	Warner Bros.	\$50,824,620	\$43,150,000

YEAR	FILM	DIRECTOR	DISTRIBUTION	U.S. Total	WorldwideTotal
		Gaghan			
2006	<i>Babel</i>	Alejandro González Iñárritu	Paramount Vantage (Paramount Pictures)	\$34,302,837	\$101,027,345
2006	<i>Blood Diamond</i>	Edward Zwick	Warner Bros. Pictures	\$57,377,916	\$114,029,263
2007	<i>Rendition</i>	Gavin Hood	New Line Cinema (Warner Bros.)	\$9,736,045	\$27,038,732
2007	<i>The Kingdom</i>	Peter Berg	Universal Pictures	\$47,536,778	\$86,658,558
2007	<i>Lions for Lambs</i>	Robert Redford	MGM	\$15,002,854	\$48,213,018
2007	<i>Kite Runner</i>	Marc Forster	Dreamworks Paramount Vantage	\$15,800,078	\$73,276,047
2007	<i>In the Valley of Elah</i>	Paul Haggis	Warner Independent Pictures	\$6,777,741	\$22,749,552
2008	<i>Slumdog Millionaire</i>	Danny Boyle	Pathé Pictures International Fox Searchlight Pictures Warner Bros. Pictures	\$141,319,928	\$236,097,365
2009	<i>The International</i>	Tom Tykwer	Columbia Pictures	\$25,450,527	\$34,684,533

Footnotes

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- ¹ Silver, Allan & Ursini, James, *Film Noir Reader*, Limelight Editions, New York, 1996, pp. 17
- ² Beck, Ulrich; (2005), *What is Globalization?* Polity, Cambridge & Malden translated by Patrick Camiller, pp. 104 -105
- ³ Ibid, pp. 112
- ⁴ Based on ideas from the lecture "Conflict and Death in post 9.11 Film: From Complacency to Culpability" held Monday, August 25th, in Georg Sverdrups hus, UiO by Dr. Michele Aaron, Senior Lecturer University of Birmingham
- ⁵ Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Terry (eds.), *Transnational Cinema, The Film Reader*, Routledge, London & New York, 2006, pp. 14
- ⁶ Ibid, pp. 14
- ⁷ Many of the ideas presented here and in this thesis are influenced by Henrik Thune's article: "Vestens globale handicap", Dagbladet 08.10.08
- ⁸ Hollows, Jane & Jancovich, Mark: *Critical Approaches to Popular Film*, Manchester University Press, 1995 pp. 183
- ⁹ Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Terry (eds.), 2006, pp. 1
- ¹⁰ Ibid, pp.1
- ¹¹ By "glocal" I refer to the concept of "glocalization" which means that the local must be understood as an aspect of the global and serves to understand the contemporary world through the key concepts of: politics of culture, cultural capital, cultural difference, cultural homogeneity, ethnicity, race and gender. See Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* (2005), pp. 46-48.
- ¹² By core and periphery cultures I refer to the world system theory were, according to Anthony Giddens "The modern world system is divided into three components, the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery, although where these are located regionally shifts over time." See *The Global Transformations Reader*, pp. 60-65
- ¹³ Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Terry (eds.), 2006, pp. 2
- ¹⁴ A repeated reference in the film is TIA – "This Is Africa", a term that is used to explain why a person reacts a certain way, in other words he/she will act in accordance with how much time that person has spent in Africa which will have had an impact on his/her decision making.
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- ¹⁶ Held, David *Democracy and The Global Order*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 99-136
- ¹⁷ Aaron, Michele, Open lecture: "Conflict and Death in post-9/11 Film" held Monday, August 25th, in Georg Sverdrups hus, UiO, by Dr. Michele Aaron, Senior Lecturer University of Birmingham
- ¹⁸ Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Terry (eds.), 2006, pp. 112-113
- ¹⁹ Natoli, Joseph, *This is a Picture and Not the World, Movies and a Post 9/11 America*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007, pp. 12
- ²⁰ Beck, Ulrich, *What is Globalization*, pp. 4
- ²¹ Boggs, Carl, *The End of Politics, Corporate Power and the Decline of the Public Sphere*, The Guildford Press, New York, London, 2000, pp. 8
- ²² Rosenbaum, Jonathan, *Movie Wars: how Hollywood and the media conspire to limits what films we can see*, A Capella Books, 2000, pp. 1
- ²³ Directors commentary on the DVD *Blood Diamond* (Zwick, 2006)
- ²⁴ Rosenbaum, Jonathan, 2000, pp. 9
- ²⁵ Ray, Robert B, *A Certain Tendency of Hollywood Cinema 1930.1980*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1985, pp. 29
- ²⁶ http://www.nordisk-sprakrad.no/nsr_internordisk.htm
- ²⁷ Many ideas on this topic are based on the introductory chapter of *Transnational Cinema the Film Reader*, Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Terry (eds.), Routledge London & New York, 2006, pp. 1-14
- ²⁸ Boggs, Carl & Pollard, Tom, Boggs, *A World In Chaos, Social Crisis and the Rise of Postmodern Cinema*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, UK, 2003, pp 11
- ²⁹ Rosenbaum, Jonathan, 2000, pp. 108
- ³⁰ Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Terry (eds.), 2006, pp. 4

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- ³¹ Naficy, Hamid, *Making Films with an Accent: Exilic and Diaspora Cinema* Princeton, Princeton University Press 1999, pp. 55
- ³² Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Thomas (eds.) 2006, pp. 118
- ³³ Ibid, pp. 1-11
- ³⁴ The postindustrial system is explain by Naficy with these key words: globalization, privatization, diversification, deregulation, digitization, convergence, and consolidation, which are all associated with centralization of the global economic and media powers in fewer hands. See Naficy, Hamid, *Home Exile, Homeland, Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, AFI Film Readers, Routledge, London, 1999, pp. 125-147.
- ³⁵ Ray Robert, 1985, pp. 363
- ³⁶ Ibid, pp. 13
- ³⁷ Ibid, pp. 363
- ³⁸ Ibid, pp. 8
- ³⁹ Ibid, pp. 13
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 13
- ⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 14
- ⁴² Beck, Ulrich, 2005, pp. 11
- ⁴³ Ray, Robert, 1985 pp. 33
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 57
- ⁴⁵ Erikson, Erik, *Childhood and Society*, New York: Norton, 1963, pp. 286
- ⁴⁶ Ray, Robert, 1985, pp. 31
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 65
- ⁴⁸ Boggs & Pollard, 2003, pp. viii
- ⁴⁹ Aaron, Michele, Open lecture: "From Complacency to Culpability: Conflict and Death in post 9.11 Film" held Monday, August 25th, in Georg Sverdrups hus, UiO, by Dr. Michele Aaron, Senior Lecturer University of Birmingham
- ⁵⁰ Westwell, Guy, *War Cinema, Hollywood on the Frontline*, Wallflower Press, London & New York, 2006, pp. 113
- ⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 113
- ⁵² Weber, Cynthia, *Imagining America at War, Morality, Politics and Film*, Routledge, London & New York, 2006, pp. 71
- ⁵³ Ray, Robert, 1985, pp. 56
- ⁵⁴ Boggs, Carl & Pollard, Tom, pp. 37 – 38
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 95
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 95
- ⁵⁷ It has to be said, Sirk's films came to be interpreted as ironic comments on the 1950s America by (post-modern) film scholars in the 1970s.
- ⁵⁸ Boggs, Carl & Pollard, Tom, 2003, pp. 78-79
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. vii –xiii
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 79
- ⁶¹ Ibid, pp. xiii
- ⁶² Ibid, pp. vii
- ⁶³ Ibid, pp. xiv
- ⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 2
- ⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 15
- ⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 16
- ⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 83-84
- ⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 81
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 104
- ⁷⁰ http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Remarks_of_Senator_Barack_Obama_on_New_Hampshire_Primary_Night
- ⁷¹ Obama, Barack, *The audacity of hope: thoughts on reclaiming the American dream*, New York, Three Rivers Press, 2006
- ⁷² Boggs, Carl & Pollard, Tom, Boggs, 2003, pp. 103-105
- ⁷³ Nye, Joseph, "Soft power: the means to success in world politics", New York: Public Affairs, 2004
- ⁷⁴ Weber, Cynthia, 2006, pp. 10-11
- ⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 20
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 20-21

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- ⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 23-24
- ⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 24-25
- ⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 2
- ⁸⁰ Bush, George W., "Statement by the President in his address to the nation", <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/11-16.html>, September 11 2001
- ⁸¹ Bush, George W., "President delivers State of Union Address", <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>, January 29, 2002
- ⁸² Weber, Cynthia, 2006, pp. 40, 55
- ⁸³ Matlary, Janne Haaland, Values and Weapons, From Humanitarian Intervention to Regime Change? Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp.13
- ⁸⁴ Weber, Cynthia, 2006, pp. 56
- ⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 56, 59, 62, 64
- ⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 67
- ⁸⁷ Ibid, pp. 69
- ⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 77, 85
- ⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 88
- ⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 89
- ⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 90
- ⁹² Ibid, pp. 117
- ⁹³ Ibid, pp. 118
- ⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 119
- ⁹⁵ Ibid, pp. 129
- ⁹⁶ Ibid, 2006, pp. 142
- ⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 142-143
- ⁹⁸ Ibid, pp. 156, 159, 160, 163
- ⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 165
- ¹⁰⁰ Natoli, Joseph, *This is a Picture and Not the World, Movies and a Post 9/11 America*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007, pp. 3
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 4
- ¹⁰² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nathan-gardels/babels-alejandro-gonzalez_1_b_39986.html
- ¹⁰³ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nathan-gardels/babels-alejandro-gonzalez_1_b_39986.html
- ¹⁰⁴ Freud's theory is that the little boy believes that in the maternal phallus even after he knows better because he has seen evidence that it does not exist has been characterized by Octave Manoni as a contradictory statement that both asserts and denies the mother's castration. In this "Je sais bien, mais quand meme" (I know very well but just the same), "the just the same" is the fetish disavowal. Manoni, *Clefs pour l'imaginaire*, Paris: Seuil (1969), 9-30. Christian Metz later applied this fetishistic structure of disavowal to the institution of cinema as the creator of believable fictions of perceptually real human beings who are nevertheless absent from the scene. Thus the cinema aims all of its technical prowess at the disavowal of the lack on which its "imaginary signifier" is based. *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, trans Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster, and Alfred Guzzetti, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press (1982), 69-76. Footnote 55 in Erens, Patricia, *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, Indian University Press, 1991, pp. 162
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- ¹⁰⁷ Natoli, Joseph, 2007, pp. 10
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 10-11
- ¹⁰⁹ Hollows & Jancovich (eds.), 1995, pp. 25
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 124
- ¹¹¹ Ibid, pp. 30
- ¹¹² Ibid, pp. 138
- ¹¹³ Ray, Robert: 1985, pp. 13
- ¹¹⁴ Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in J Curran et al., eds., *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold 1977. pp. 350
- ¹¹⁵ Hollows & Jancovich (eds.), 1995, pp. 20
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 22

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- ¹¹⁷ Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M, (1977), pp. 351
- ¹¹⁸ Adorno, T, "Culture Industry Reconsidered", *New German Critique*, 6 (4), 1975, pp. 17
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 21
- ¹²⁰ D. MacDonald, *Against the American Grain*, London: Victor Gollanz, 1963, pp.14.
- ¹²¹ Hollows & Jancovich (eds.), 1995, pp. 124
- ¹²² *Ibid*, pp. 124, 125, 127, 128-131, 145
- ¹²³ *Ibid*, pp. 138, 140 -141
- ¹²⁴ Manoni, Octave, *Clefs pour l'Imaginaire ou l'Aute Scène* (Paris, Le Seuil, 1969), pp. 9, 163-64
- ¹²⁵ Natoli, Joseph, 2007, pp. 6
- ¹²⁶ Beck, Ulrich, 2005, pp. 5-13,
- ¹²⁷ Natoli, Joseph, 2007, pp. 8
- ¹²⁸ Ray, Robert, 1985, pp. 9
- ¹²⁹ *From Casablanca*, 1942, directed by Michael Curtiz
- ¹³⁰ Beck, Ulrich, 2005, pp. 9
- ¹³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 9
- ¹³² *Ibid*, pp. 11
- ¹³³ *Ibid*, pp. 13
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 12
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 12-13
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 5-13,
- ¹³⁷ Boggs, Carl, 2000, pp. 9
- ¹³⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 112
- ¹³⁹ Held, David & McGrew Anthony (eds.), 2005, pp. 236
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 253
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp. 254,
- ¹⁴² Beck, Ulrich, 2005, pp. 46
- ¹⁴³ Held, David & McGrew, Anthony (eds.) 2005, pp. 260
- ¹⁴⁴ Beck, Ulrich, 2005, pp. 260-263
- ¹⁴⁵ Held, David & McGrew, Anthony (eds.) 2005, pp. 265
- ¹⁴⁶ Beck, Ulrich, 2005, pp. 266
- ¹⁴⁷ Held, David & McGrew, Anthony (eds.) 2005, pp. 266
- ¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 265,
- ¹⁴⁹ Boggs, Carl & Pollard, Tom, 2003, pp 1
- ¹⁵⁰ Mediascapes refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios)...and to the images of the world created by these medias...What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television, film, and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and ethnoscapas [landscapes of people] to viewers throughout the world. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 35
- ¹⁵¹ Grant, Barry Keith (ed.), *Film Genre Reader III*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2003, pp. 516-534, based on ideas from David Desser's essay "Global Noir".
- ¹⁵² Held, David & McGrew Anthony (eds.), 2005, pp. 271- 272
- ¹⁵³ *Ibid*, pp. 273
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 284-285, 256
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 237, 287
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 289
- ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 288-289, 239
- ¹⁵⁸ http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/03/movies/03sant.html?_r=1
- ¹⁵⁹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_Diamond_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_Diamond_(film))
- ¹⁶⁰ See Grant, Barry Keith, *Film Genre, From Iconography to Ideology*, Wallflower Press, London, 2007, pp. 83 on "Case study: Die Hard and the Action Film".
- ¹⁶¹ Bling, bling or just bling is a slang term popularized in Hip Hop culture and used to describe big, flashy jewellery. The concept is often associated with either the working and lower middle classes or the newly wealthy, implying that the concept of riches and shiny items is something new to them. Used in this sense, it can be derogatory, suggesting lack of good taste. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bling_bling#cite_note-7
- ¹⁶² <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/books/39192>

¹⁶³ Musical genre that incorporates diverse styles from Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia, South and Central America, the Caribbean, and non-mainstream Western folk sources. The term was first coined largely in response to the sudden increase of recordings in non-English languages that were released in Great Britain and the United States in the 1980s, but by the early 1990s world music had become a bona fide musical genre and counterpoint to the increasingly synthetic sounds of Western pop music. Initially, African popular music and world music were virtually synonymous, and the genre's biggest stars included the Nigerians King Sunny Ade and Fela Anikulapo Kuti and the Senegalese Youssou N'Dour. See: <http://www.answers.com/topic/world-music>

¹⁶⁴ "The reconciliatory pattern found its most typical incarnation, however, in one particular narrative: the story of the private man attempting to keep from being drawn into action on any but his own terms. In this story the reluctant hero's ultimate willingness to help the community satisfied the official values. But by portraying this aid as demanding only a temporary involvement, the story preserved the values of individualism as well." See: Ray, Robert, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980*, Princeton University Press, 1985, pp.65

¹⁶⁵ http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2007/webArticles/011207_bdiamond.htm

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.amnestyusa.org/business-and-human-rights/conflict-diamonds/page.do?id=1051176>

¹⁶⁷ http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/03/movies/03sant.html?_r=1

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/>

¹⁶⁹ http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec06/diamonds_12-04.html

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

¹⁷¹ Ibid

¹⁷² http://money.cnn.com/2006/09/11/news/companies/diamondjewelry_movie/index.htm

¹⁷³ Ezra, Elizabeth & Rowden, Terry (eds.), 2006, pp. 122

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=awardcentral&jump=contenders&id=actor&articleid=VR1117986990&cs=1>

¹⁷⁵ The analysis is based on the viewing of the film and of the reviews and interviews of in these articles: Garner, Stanton B Performance Review: "Babel"

Theatre Journal Journal Record 57:1 (March 2005) Journal Issue pp. 103-104

Felperin, Leslie Reviews: Films: "Babel"

Sight and Sound Journal Record 17:2 (February 2007) Journal Issue pp. 41-42

Solórzano, Fernanda On Set: Babel

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Travers, Peter Movies: "Babel"

Rolling Stone Journal Record 1012 (2 November 2006) Journal Issue pp. 88

¹⁷⁶ CINEASTE, Spring 2009, pp. 77

¹⁷⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slumdog_Millionaire

¹⁷⁸ *Mamma Mia* (Lloyd, 2008) was an immensely popular film based on the musical Mamma Mia, which again was based on Abba hits. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamma_Mia!_%28film%29

¹⁷⁹ At Boxofficemojo.com it is labeled drama,

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/video/2009/jan/13/danny-boyle-slumdog-millionaire>

¹⁸¹ Boggs, Carl & Pollard, Tom, Boggs, 2003, pp 224

¹⁸² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babel_%28film%29#cite_note-Mojo-9

¹⁸³ Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large, Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Public Worlds, Volume, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 1996, pp. 166, 176

¹⁸⁴ Natoli, Joseph, 2007, pp. 14

¹⁸⁵ Appadurai, Arjun, 1996, pp.64-65

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 1996, pp. 31